UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia

Social Protection Policies in South Asia

Third Ministerial Meeting
20-22 February 2011
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

Report
Acknowledgements

The Third UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia on Social Protection Policies in South Asia, is the successful outcome of the concerted efforts of the Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka, and the Social and Human Sciences Sector of UNESCO New Delhi Office. The Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka, including Mr Felix Perera, Hon. Minister of Social Services, Mr. Chandrasiri Sooriyarachchi, Deputy Minister, Ms. W. Yamuna Chitranganie, Secretary, Mr. Sunil Samaranweera, Additional Secretary and Mr. Lal Ratnaweera, Director of Planning, all deserve special mention for their dedication, hard work and continuous efforts in organizing and hosting the Forum.

UNESCO is particularly grateful to Hon D.M. Jayaratne, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, who was the chief guest at the inaugural session of the Forum, and all the ministers and high level representatives who participated in the Forum and have committed to the adoption of the Colombo Declaration: Hon. Ms. Amena S. Afzali, Minister of Work and Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled, Afghanistan, Hon. Mr. Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shaheed, Minister of Social Welfare, Bangladesh, Hon. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister, Ministry of Social Services and Social Welfare, Sri Lanka, Mr. Tshewang Tandin, Director General, Ministry of Education, Bhutan, Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission, India, Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister of Health and Family, Maldives and Ms. Bindra Hada, Secretary, National Planning Commission of Nepal.

UNESCO is thankful to the advisory committee that was set up in March 2010 and under whose expert guidance the Forum has benefitted greatly, comprising of the following members: Dr. Javeed Alam, Chairperson, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Dr. Ranjit Sinha, Member Secretary, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Dr. K. N. Jehangir, Ex-Director-Consultant, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Prof. Ravi Srivastava, Professor of Economics and Chairperson, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Prof. Alakh Sharma, Professor and Director, Institute for Human Development, New Delhi and Co-Director Social Protection in Asia (SPA) network, Mr. Markus Ruck, Decent Work Team, Senior Specialist on Social Security, International Labour Organization (ILO) India, Ms. Sherin Khan, Decent Work Team, Senior Child Labour Specialist (South Asia International Labour Organization (ILO), Ms. Ramya Subrahmanian, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF India, Ms. Marina Faetanini, Programme Specialist, Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO New Delhi and Regional Coordinator for UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia and Ms. Rukmini Tankha, Consultant, Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO New Delhi.

The Forum was supported by a variety of partners who provided meaningful and crucial contributions: United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Development Research Centre (IDRC–South Asia), Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Institute for Human Development, New Delhi (IHD), Social Protection...
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UNESCO is grateful to all the researchers and scholars, social activists, representatives of UN agencies and international organizations from across South Asia who participated in the Forum, including those who provided contributions through papers, presentations, and written and oral comments.

The complete version of all the presentations of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers on Social Protection Policies in South Asia can be downloaded from the UNESCO New Delhi website: www.unesco.org/newdelhi.
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The proceedings are based on the presentations and discussion that took place at the Third Meeting of UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development on Social Protection Policies in South Asia, 20-22 February 2011, and relevant background material used during the Forum.

1. Background

The Third Meeting of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development on Social Protection Policies in South Asia, was jointly organized by UNESCO and the Ministry of Social Services\(^1\), Government of Sri Lanka. Such Fora were launched by UNESCO in Latin America in 2001, as part of the framework for UNESCO’s Management of Social Transformation Programme (MOST)\(^2\). The Fora of ministers aim to provide the following: a space for regional dialogue between ministries, academic researchers and members of civil society on regional strategies for social policy; a platform for the exchange of experiences and best practices on national policies; an environment that encourages the scope and development of joint projects and opportunities to influence international reflection and policy-making.

The South Asian Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development was launched in 2006 in Bhurban, Pakistan, with a ministerial meeting on Governance and Public Accountability. It concluded with an agreement by the ministers to institutionalize the Forum. Two years later, in 2008 in New Delhi, India, a second ministerial meeting on Transparency, Right to Information and Social Development was organized. In the resulting New Delhi Declaration, ministers stressed the importance of research for evidence-based policy-making thus: “...to reiterate our common resolve to strengthen the Forum of Ministers of Social Development in South Asia, with the aim of facilitating consultations and dialogue that will help to develop social policies on the basis of scientific evidence”.

The MOST program, at present, is focusing on the social implications of the financial and economic crisis and the appropriate policy responses, through all regional and sub-regional Fora of ministers in charge of social development from Latin America to Africa and South Asia.

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\(^1\) The Ministry of Social Services is a long time partner of the MOST program, and has been a regular member of the MOST Intergovernmental Council. Due to the nature of its work, it served as an appropriate platform for the nature and theme of the dialogue proposed by the Forum.

\(^2\) In 1994, UNESCO launched the ‘Management of Social Transformations’ (MOST) programme, with the objective that it would play a significant role in disseminating knowledge to member states on managing social challenges and transformations. A key objective is to assist member states in improving the quality of policy-making by encouraging evidence-based policy making and research and analysis through dialogue with key stakeholders.
UNESCO also fully supports the Social Protection Floor Initiative\(^3\) led by ILO and WHO, and is participating with them in its development. At the inter-agency meeting on the Social Protection Floor (Turin, Italy, October 2009), it was suggested that the UNESCO Fora of Ministers in charge of Social Development could publicly advocate for this initiative and exchange best practices regarding social protection.

Therefore, in order to provide the opportunity for South Asian countries to have a social policy dialogue in the field of social protection policies, it was decided to focus the Third Ministerial Forum on social protection policies in South Asia.

2. **Key objectives and outcomes**

The main objective of the Forum was to contribute towards the advancement of the agenda for a social protection floor in South Asia, ensuring universal access to essential social transfers (cash and kind transfers providing minimum income and livelihood security) and services (water and sanitation, food and adequate nutrition, health, education, housing) and also the advancement of knowledge and social research on neglected themes and excluded groups in the field of social protection, such as the migrants and the urban poor. It was hoped that the Forum would allow for the development of opportunities to sustain horizontal cooperation in South Asia at the levels of academic research and of public policy.

The expected outcomes of the Forum were to increase awareness, engagement and advocacy on the importance of social protection policies in the South Asian Region, based on sound research. It was anticipated that the participants of the Forum would gain a better knowledge of existing social protection policies in South Asia and possibilities for their replication and that they would gain a better understanding of the importance of developing social science research and capacity as a critical part of the policy making process.

The intended outputs of the Forum included the adoption of a political declaration on social protection policies reflecting a common consensus on the need for governments to ensure universal access to a minimum social protection floor. Key recommendations emanating from the Forum, the Declaration, and the two research meeting organized prior to the Forum, were to be highlighted and disseminated to the social science community, civil society and policy makers in South Asia online, through mailing lists, and media.

\(^3\) The Social Protection Floor (SPF) corresponds to a set of essential transfers, services and facilities that all citizens everywhere should enjoy to ensure the realization of the rights embodied in human right treaties. By working on both supply and demand side measures, the Social Protection Floor takes a holistic approach to social protection including (1) Services: Ensuring the availability, continuity, and geographical and financial access to essential services, such as water and sanitation, food and adequate nutrition, health, education, housing, life and asset saving information and other social services (2) Transfers: Realizing access by ensuring a basic set of essential social transfers, in cash and in kind, to provide a minimum income and livelihood security for poor and vulnerable populations and to facilitate access to essential services.
3. **INAUGURAL SESSION: SUNDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2011**

**Welcome Address:** Ms. W.Yamuna Chitranganie, Secretary, Ministry of Social Services, Sri Lanka  
**Guests of Honor:**  
Ms. Pilar Álvarez-Laso, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, and Hon. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka  
**Chief Guest:** Hon. D. M. Jayaratne, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

At the inaugural session of the Forum, held on the evening of 20 February 2011, the participants of the UNESCO Forum and other invitees celebrated the **World Day of Social Justice**, and reiterated their common resolve to achieve justice in social development through complementary social protection measures. It was hoped that the celebration of the World Day of Social Justice, for the first time in Sri Lanka, would contribute to raising the profile of the social science community in Sri Lanka and highlight its relevance for the development of research based social policies in the region.

Ms. W. Yamuna Chitranganie, Secretary, Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka, extended a warm welcome to the distinguished guests and participants in her welcome address and stated that she hoped that the Forum would become a turning point in the social development of the countries of the region.

Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka, in his address, stressed the importance of the two-day meeting in sharing experiences and best practices to sharpen policy development and program implementation, in the field of social protection. Commenting on the significance of 20 February as the World Day of Social Justice he remarked, “Today is a day we realize and recognize human development and human dignity as a core value in governance and responsible globalization. Social Justice declares fair outcomes for all through employment, social protection, social dialogue, and fundamental principles and rights at work (...) Today for the first time in Sri Lanka we are proud to host and celebrate efforts to put people at the centre of development plans and attempt to spread the favor of social justice, both within and between countries. Therefore, I am proud of having the World Day of Social Justice being celebrated in Colombo for the first time”. Referring to the programs in Sri Lanka, he stated that the Ministry of Social Services focuses on broader social protection policies covering the disadvantaged groups in society such as persons with disabilities, the elderly, and single parent families, including the **Mahinda Chintana** policies covering these segments of society.

Ms. Pilar Álvarez-Laso, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences stated in her speech that the events of recent years, including the need to mitigate the effects

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4 The **Mahinda Chintana** vision for the future, proposed by His Excellency Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of Sri Lanka, is based on the economic philosophy that the growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) alone would not bring economic prosperity to the society. The **Mahinda Chinthana** Goal (MCG) is to increase the GDP to provide benefits to every segment of society.
of the economic and social crises, have thrown a spotlight on the significance of social protection policies to address adverse social impacts and that now a political momentum is building in favor of long term investments in social protection. While addressing the World Day of Social Justice celebrations, she remarked, “Social justice is at the heart of UNESCO’s mandate, which is to contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, sciences and culture.” She said the South Asia region faced many challenges in terms of poverty and deprivation, especially the challenge to reduce the illiteracy rate. Due to social and economic barriers, South Asian illiteracy rates are among the highest in the world and the lack of skilled training prevents the poor from accessing more productive employment opportunities. Within South Asia, 40 percent of children in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan are underweight. The informal sector predominates with poor conditions of work, low wages and few formal social security benefits. There is also an overlap between those who are poor and those who belong to marginalized communities such as people from Dalit or untouchable castes, minority religious groups and indigenous peoples.

Ms. Álvarez-Laso also highlighted that natural disasters have hampered development efforts in recent times. The region has seen some of the world’s major natural disasters. Recent catastrophic flooding, earthquakes and the devastating tsunami have badly affected the region during the past decade. For various social and political reasons, South Asia is also experiencing armed and other types of conflicts.

She further pointed out that the consensus among social scientists is that (with a few exceptions) the quality of both teaching and research in the social sciences in South Asia is declining. Accountability is virtually absent and peer evaluation systems are weak in publicly funded research institutions and universities. Compared with science and technology, the funding of social science research is marginal in the region as a whole. Yet, the social development challenges facing the region require strong capacities in social science research.

Finally, she noted that in bringing together key policy-makers and the research community, the Forum of Ministers provides an important opportunity to address issues of social protection in the region. She hoped that the meeting would contribute to an understanding of the need for greater investment in the social sciences, both nationally and regionally, for more emphasis on capacity-building, to design policies for poverty eradication and social inclusion and to encourage research that contributed to a better understanding of socio-economic and political trends in the region.

**Hon D.M. Jayaratne**, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, stated that the Third Meeting of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development had selected a very relevant theme, *Social Protection Policies in South Asia*, which would enable the participating countries to share and learn from their experiences. Anticipating the cross country learnings, he said, “There will be a healthy exchange of ideas, perspectives, views and country experiences, in the formulation and implementation of social protection policies by each of the member countries, that will stand them in good stead while making realistic assessments and evaluations of their individual
policies. Such self-assessments and evaluations would help reformulating or reshaping their individual country policies to provide greater benefits to their citizens.”

He noted that Sri Lanka has a long history of social protection policies and programs which have contributed to narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor. The introduction of free education for all, from the primary level to university, during the past 60 years has not only produced a highly literate society, but has also opened up a vast potential and provided avenues for the educated rural poor to climb up the social ladder. The provision of free mid-day meals and free uniforms and textbooks to school-going children of all grades has further assisted economically vulnerable families to educate their children. Free medical facilities for the entire population have helped in building a healthy society and increasing the life expectancy of the population. The *Samurdhi* Program, a package of financial benefits, granted together with employment facilities to those below the official poverty line, has enabled over 1.5 million families in the country to sustain their livelihoods. All these programs have contributed to the decline of Sri Lanka’s poverty which was 15.2 percent in 2006 and fell to 7.6 percent in 2010. A plethora of laws and enactments have also been passed in Sri Lanka’s legislature, which have contributed to the social protection of general citizens.

Finally, the Prime Minister thanked UNESCO for the pioneering efforts made to work in collaboration with the member countries of South Asia, to promote and enhance dialogue between ministers, academics, researchers and members of civil society, for strengthening the development of social protection policies in the region.

The inaugural session of the Forum included cultural performances by differently-abled persons and dance performances by children with hearing impairment, reinforcing the message of social inclusion. The session was followed by a welcome reception and dinner hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka.

4. **MONDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2011**

**Mr. Armoogum Parsuramen,** Director and UNESCO Representative to India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka, in his opening remarks, stated that the main objective of the meeting was to increase the commitment for expanding the scope and benefits of social protection policies in the countries of the region. He stated that one of the ways MOST assists Member States to respond to global challenges is through the regional and sub-regional Fora of Ministers in charge of Social Development. These opportunities for social policy dialogue enable ministers to meet and exchange their experiences and to debate with researchers and other important stakeholders in social development.

As a response to the recent global economic and financial crisis, Mr. Parsuramen noted that the UNESCO MOST program is currently focusing on the social implications of the financial and economic crisis and appropriate policy responses, and social protection is one of the key policy
responses to combat the social impacts, especially for the most vulnerable groups such as migrants, the urban poor, informal workers and the youth.

Mr. Parsuramen stressed that UNESCO is particularly interested in the advancement of knowledge and social research on excluded groups such as migrants and the urban poor within the field of social protection. Finally, he hoped that the Forum would contribute towards the advancement of the agenda for a social protection floor in South Asia, ensuring universal access to essential social transfers and services.

### Session 1: Recommendations of UNESCO-ICSSR Research Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia

**Chair:** Prof. Javeed Alam, Chairperson, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)

**Presentation:** Prof. Ravi Srivastava, Professor of Economics & Chairperson, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University

**Panelists:** Prof. Achin Chakraborty, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, India; Mr C. Upendranadh, Asia Governance Coordinator, ActionAid; Prof. Hettige, Professor and Chair of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

The purpose of this session was to gather inputs and suggestions on possible content for the Ministerial Declaration to be adopted at the closing session. Discussions were based on the Summary Report of the UNESCO-ICSSR Research Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia, organized on 18-19 March 2010 in New Delhi, India, and notably on its recommendations. The meeting brought together over 40 researchers and scholars across South Asia, providing a platform for discussions on country-specific social protection policies and initiatives and identification of best practices. Recommendations included extending the benefits of social protection to the most neglected and vulnerable sections of society, promoting employment-led development strategies to facilitate inclusive and redistributive growth, identifying gaps in design modalities, the scope and implementation quality of social protection programs, prioritizing the financing of social protection measures and advancing the agenda for a social protection floor in the region. Similarly, the Summary Report of the UNESCO – NSF National Symposium on Social Protection Policies in Sri Lanka, held on 30 November – 1 December 2010 provided inputs and suggestions.

**Prof. Ravi Srivastava,** Professor of Economics & Chairperson, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University, in his presentation stated that the objectives of the UNESCO-ICSSR Research Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia were to strengthen

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5 The meeting was undertaken in collaboration with the Indian Council for Social Science Research, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), the Social Protection in Asia (SPA) Network & the Institute for Human Development (IHD). Participants included academic experts from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka, representatives of multilateral and bilateral development agencies, non-governmental development agencies, development practitioners and policy makers from India.
the policy-research content of the Third Ministerial Forum; share research on social protection initiatives for evidence-based policy-making; analyze conditions under which different social policies work and draw lessons; explore the possibilities of strengthening such policies to enhance transformative potential and to build a regional perspective on social protection. He noted that the meeting further discussed issues such as country level perspectives on linkages between social protection and human development; the working of current social protection programs in terms of their design, implementation, coverage, quality, institutional capacities, governance and fiscal possibilities; and the coherent social policy alternatives that could subsequently be recommended nationally or regionally.

The meeting also clarified the concept of social protection by stating that it addresses insecurities related to the failure to meet basic economic and social needs (e.g. persistent poverty and deprivation) as well as those related to sudden change for the worse (e.g. natural disaster or health catastrophe). Social protection policies need to be preventive, protective and promotional in their scope, and recently the ‘transformative potential’ of social protection has also been acknowledged. It was observed that the notion of a ‘social protection floor’ became prominent during the economic and financial crisis, but its conceptual basis has been under discussion in various forms, for some time. Although the ‘social protection floor’ is defined as a minimum, ensuring universal access to essential social transfers and services, it would need to be defined and concretized in each specific context.

The meeting identified challenges in social protection programs in South Asia, including difficulties in the identification of vulnerable groups; fiscal mechanisms and the financing of programs; the need for strengthening governance and delivery mechanisms to improve delivery; deciding between modalities of universal or targeted cash or kind assistance, conditional or unconditional social protection programs and also the incorporation of the rights-based approach.

While building a picture of the context of South Asian countries, certain common deficits were identified such as a low per capita income, significant poverty and low human development. Findings revealed that there is little evidence that the effects of high economic growth are trickling down. There is a slow rate of structural transformation in the labor market. Conventional social security measures cover only a small fraction of the labor force (formal workers), even though the informal segment of the economy predominates, along with the prevalence of the “working poor”.

Existing social protection programs include food assistance and transfers in kind, unconditional cash transfer programs (Samurdhi in Sri Lanka, Old Age Allowance in Bangladesh and Nepal, and the National Old Age Pension Scheme in India), conditional transfers in cash (Cash for Education in Bangladesh, Janani Suraksha Yojana in India), conditional transfers in kind (Vulnerable Group Development Program in Bangladesh, the Midday Meal Scheme in India) and programs with employment as a central focus. It was acknowledged that there are also existing
tradition-based social assistance programs such as Zakat in Pakistan\(^6\) and Kidu\(^7\) in Bhutan. It was also noted that the area of social protection in urban areas has been relatively neglected, along with the need for a rights-based approach to basic shelter and water, and that ultimately an inclusive definition of an urban citizen is required.

Recommendations identified by researchers at the meeting included the following: The need to develop a shared understanding of the extension of social protection based on a rights-based framework across the region; to include employment generation as a key objective in macroeconomic policies; putting in place appropriate fiscal policies for resource mobilization and spending on social protection; developing cooperation to deal with common resource-based vulnerabilities which have regional ramifications (floods, climate change, disasters, conflicts); envisaging the development of a social protection floor encompassing education, health care, food, shelter and protective social security; ensuring a program minimum that could be constituted by a public works type program (such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), a major social assistance program, and a social security package for informal workers.

The meeting recognized that while citizenship is the core requirement to qualify for social protection, there is a need to identify vulnerable groups with weak citizenship status, such as internal or cross border migrants and especially extend social protection to them. Increased investments and efforts in knowledge building are needed to improve the design and governance capacity of social protection programs. Learning from programs and sharing best practices across the region needs to be undertaken frequently, and governments, social science institutions and multilateral bodies should develop mechanisms to support the generation and sharing of knowledge. This could be encouraged by governments and multilaterals through the creation of think tanks focusing on social protection in the region.

Prof Achin Chakraborty, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, India, commented that it is necessary to look at past policies and programs to understand how current programs have evolved at present. Talking in the context of India, he pointed out that the past experiences of extending social protection have provided a series of experiments with both success and failures. Over time, through trial and error, these programs have become more managerially sophisticated and politically refined, and have gradually begun incorporating elements of a rights-based approach. However, he noted that for the rights based approach to be successful, it has to be matched by adequate financial resources.

Mr. C Upendranadh, Asia Governance Coordinator, Action Aid elaborated that poverty reduction strategies should not be seen as residual but as mainstream development programs. Social protection programs have a ‘transformational’ potential. To improve the impact of

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\(^6\) The Zakat programme in Pakistan, which is based on the Islamic concept of zakat as religious duty, was the first major form of social assistance in the country, intended to assist the needy, the indigent and the poor.
\(^7\) Kidu refers to welfare support granted by the King of Bhutan to people facing various situations of hardship, mostly in the form of land, but also cash and in-kind according to needs.
programs there is a need to learn from the experience of South East Asian countries in terms of design and efficiency of implementation. The design, institutional and governance capacities of social protection programs require improvement to minimize leakages. The multi-stakeholder approach involving civil society organizations (advocating for the right to information, social audits etc.) should be employed for ensuring better delivery of social protection programs. Mr. Upendranadh noted that there is need for a human rights approach to development where basic needs are considered as basic rights and universal social protection for all becomes an agenda for the future.

Prof Siri Hettige, Professor and Chair of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, while sharing the main findings of the UNESCO – NSF National Symposium on Social Protection Policies in Sri Lanka\(^8\), stated that in the South Asian context Sri Lanka’s experience has been unique in the field of social development. In reviewing national policies, he noted that guaranteed entitlements exist only in certain areas. These include the state sector pensions, Employees Provident Fund, Employees Trust Fund and health and educational services. Universal free health and educational services have been provided for more than six decades, and their impact in terms of health and educational indicators for males and females, stand out impressively among the social development indicators of South Asia.

In the informal sector, which constitutes 60 percent of the working population, only a small proportion is covered, due to the voluntary nature of the contribution-based pension schemes. The scheme for migrant workers, too, is contributory (voluntary) and again covers only a small proportion. The poverty alleviation program, the Samurdhi program, covers a large population of 1.9 million families. However, as it is not an entitlement program, it suffers from targeting issues. There is also the problem regarding the adequacy of the benefits. The Old Age Scheme covers only 11 percent through formal protection schemes. Even with universal free health care services, out of pocket expenses\(^9\) constitute a significant burden.

Outlining the various components of social security programs in Sri Lanka, Prof. Hettige identified some of the gaps in these programs. For accidents, legal provision covers only factory workers and leaves out the informal sector workers and the self-employed. There is no comprehensive national policy that covers all forms of displacement due to multiple contingencies such as disasters and conflicts. Other remaining issues are the lack of comprehensive policies covering all areas of deficiency and adversity and difficulties in choosing between an entitlement and a contributory or state patronage policy approach. He pointed out that there are also administrative issues such as the need to rationalize programs, choice of

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\(^8\) The UNESCO – NSF National Symposium on Social Protection Policies in Sri Lanka was held in Colombo between 30 November – 1 December 2010 as a preparatory meeting for the UNESCO Forum on Social Protection Policies in South Asia. The meeting was attended by 50 researchers and scholars. It reviewed the present status of social protection policies in Sri Lanka and created a platform for exchange of views and coordination among several government and non-government agencies involved in the development and implementation of social protection policies.

\(^9\) Non-reimbursable medical expenses incurred by patients, which are not covered within the medical benefits of the health program.
whether to adopt universal versus targeted programs, issues of coordination and defining the role of civil society organizations. The need for a family policy which takes into account the gaps in social protection policies was pointed out, as was the need to develop evidence-based policies to use scarce resources effectively.

Discussion
In the discussion, it was pointed out that the issue of employment after graduation remains unaddressed as many young graduates remain unemployed for a considerable length of time after graduation. Though many countries in the region have had employment programs for youth, issues remain at the implementation stage of these programs that result from the heterogeneous nature of the target group. It was stressed that strengthening the institutions and governance mechanisms in the delivery of social protection programs would, to a large extent, help to improve the problem of ensuring entitlements and rights. An inadequate lack of knowledge of the beneficiaries of social protection programs is common in all countries of the region and the involvement of civil society organizations could improve the situation. A comprehensive national policy is required to ensure the rights of people displaced due to disasters, both natural and man-made (including actions by the state in the larger interest of society such as slum evictions).
Session 2: Country Experiences—Learning and Sharing: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and India

Speakers: Hon. Ms. Amena S. Afzali, Minister of Work and Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled, Afghanistan; Hon. Mr. Enamul Haque Mostafa Shaheed, Minister of Social Welfare, Bangladesh; Mr. Tshewang Tandin, Director General, Ministry of Education, Bhutan; Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India

Moderator: Mr. Armoogum Parsuramen, Director and UNESCO Representative to India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka

Each country presentation focused on the most innovative, exemplary or successful national social protection schemes. The session discussed each country’s experience with a few selected schemes, while keeping a particular focus on means of implementation, provisions for transparency and accountability, and results achieved. The experience of Afghanistan is that of a country confronted with civil strife and the consolidated National Social Protection Strategy, along with other workfare and cash transfer schemes are attempts at institutionalizing social protection. Bangladesh meanwhile has demonstrated an array of social protection interventions such as the Female Secondary School Assistance Program, the Vulnerable Group Development Program, the 100 Day Employment Generation Program and a gamut of microcredit programs. In Bhutan, in the absence of formal safety nets, traditional forms of social assistance such as inter household transfers in cash and kind and welfare (Kidu), have been predominant. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in India has generated immense interest because of its rights-based approach to delivering social protection. This paradigm shift has been supported by the passing of the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, which emphasizes the need for providing socio-economic security to the large proportion of workers engaged in the unorganized sector. Policies such as the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP), focusing on these marginalized strata, have been operational for more than three decades and are being reformulated to make them more effective.

Hon. Ms. Amena S. Afzali, Minister of Work and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, Afghanistan, while expressing her gratitude to the Government of Sri Lanka and UNESCO for organizing such an important meeting, stated that the Forum, “has provided an appropriate platform for dialogue among policy makers, researchers, civil society institutions as well as an excellent opportunity for the exchange of best practices among the participating countries”. In her presentation, Ms. Afzali outlined how the Government of Afghanistan, as part of its Social Protection Strategy, has embarked on developing and implementing a number of programs and projects, of which the National Skills Development Program (NSDP) is one of the most important. The NSDP is aimed at contributing to the socio-economic recovery of Afghanistan, through the provision of a national vocational and training system, which is responsive to the

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10 Other social protection initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled include providing pensions to public sector and military retirees and unconditional cash transfers to martyr’s families, the war disabled and chronically poor rural families. A host of direct support services are also provided for women, people with disability and children.
labor market needs of the country and can provide Afghan men and women with the knowledge and skills required to obtain decent work. The aims of NSDP were to achieve:
(i) Market–driven training to increase wage and self-employment opportunities (including business training, linkages to micro-credit, and business development support services)
(ii) Skills training for 150,000 unemployed and under employed Afghans aged over 14 years by the end of 2010. There is a specific focus on vulnerable groups and specific targets for women reflecting MDG targets.
(iii) Establish and build capacity within the NSDP to generate and distribute labor market information
(iv) Lay the foundations for an independent National Vocational Education and Training Authority.

The results of the program show that 41,000 people have been trained with government funding and a further 2,600 are currently in training. The trained persons include 36 percent women and 3-5 percent disabled. About 84 percent of all trainees gained employment following the training, and a study shows that the monthly income of trained persons has doubled. As part of the program, competency-based, National Occupational Skills Standards for eighty four priority occupations were identified, and the capacity building of trainers was undertaken. Some challenges remain, including the overall low capacity of trainers and the lack of qualified trainers for women in the rural areas; difficulties in diversifying away from the traditional skills of women; bureaucratic delay particularly with regard to finance; unsuitable training environments for the disabled (etc.). Further, the minimum income earned through the training program is barely above the national poverty line.

Mr. Moshiur Rahman, Director General, Department of Social Services, Ministry of Social Welfare, Bangladesh, stated at the outset that it was his privilege to make the country presentation on behalf of Hon. Mr. Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shaheed, Minister of Social Welfare. He noted that the Constitution of Bangladesh ensures social protection and the basic needs of vulnerable groups. Poverty reduction and the social security policies of Bangladesh include the provision of special allowances for different underprivileged sections: employment generation programs for the poor; micro credit programs; food security programs and initiatives to support the young in education, health and vocational training. The Ministry of Social Welfare in particular is providing interest free micro-credit to vulnerable groups for self-employment. These programs are implemented through group formation, community organization and provide social education, skill development training, training on primary health care, sanitation, nutrition etc. Social cash transfer programs have increased household income and reduced the food and health insecurity of the vulnerable. Old age allowances were introduced in 1998 and at present the Government of Bangladesh supports 2.48 million beneficiaries. Allowances for widows and deserted, destitute women also exist.

While providing details of social protection programs, Mr. Rahman elaborated that the Vulnerable Group Development Program is a national program, reportedly reaching 500,000 women per year. Beneficiaries selected by local government representatives, participate in a 24-month program involving a monthly wheat ration. The objective of this program is to
develop savings for initial capital accumulation and income-generating inputs and also to impart life skills through training. The Vulnerable Group Feeding program provides food and basic needs to the most vulnerable and marginal groups of the poor, widows, the aged etc. It is intended to mitigate the negative impact and distress induced by disasters on both food and non-food consumption of the poor.

The Food for Work program is a safety net program focusing on the creation of rural infrastructure and employment for the vulnerable poor. Through this program, the government provides wage payment to workers through labor-intensive public works, which provides relief during periods of seasonal unemployment. The Primary Education Stipend Project aims to increase enrolment from poor families, reduce dropout, increase the rate of completion of schooling, control child labor and raise the quality of primary education. Through these programs, run by the government, a vibrant non-government sector and private sector organizations, it has been made possible to reduce poverty in the country.

Mr. Tshewang Tandin, Director General, Ministry of Education, Bhutan, stated that the Tenth Five Year Plan of Bhutan gives high priority to poverty alleviation. The government plans to reduce the percentage of the population who live below the poverty line from the 32 percent, recorded in 2003, to 15 percent during the plan period ending in 2013. The Constitution of Bhutan which was approved in 2008, guarantees social protection to the population in Articles 9 and 19, stating that the state shall provide free access to basic public health services and free education to all children of school going age up to class 10 respectively.

The constitution also guarantees protection to women and children and the elderly. The commitment of the King of Bhutan to social protection has been an important factor in the effective implementation of Bhutan’s social policies. In his coronation address in 2008, His Majesty the King of Bhutan stated “….throughout my reign I will never rule you as a king. I will protect you as a parent, care for you as a brother and serve you as a son…I shall always serve you, day and night, in the spirit of kindness, justice and equality…” . The traditional practice of the King of Bhutan granting Kidu or welfare to needy people still exists. The focus of Kidu includes (i) helping vulnerable individuals achieve greater economic security through provision of maintenance allowance (ii) providing basic maintenance grants for students from less privileged backgrounds (iii) granting land to landless people and (iv) providing emotional and economic support during times of bereavement caused by natural or man-made calamities. For the delivery of Kidu, office networks have been set up covering all regions of the country to identify and seek needy people. The principles of Gross National Happiness and Buddhism are used as guiding principles for development, though there is room for research on the gaps between intention and reality in the field. Another challenge has been to identify the vulnerable groups who need social protection.

Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission and Member, National Advisory Council, Government of India, stated that India has a long history of social protection programs and in his presentation he would touch upon only three programs, namely i) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) (ii) Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and
Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) and (iii) National Food Security Act. The MGNREGA program is the largest employment program in human history and has contributed to deepening democracy in the country. It is a bottom up and people centered program, where employment is guaranteed for 100 days a year to each rural household that demands work. It is estimated that in the last year 50 million families have benefited from the program, out of which 51 per cent of workers belong to scheduled caste and tribal families and 48 percent have been women. Additionally about 85 percent of wage payment for the program is made through special bank or post office accounts that have been opened.

However despite its laudable objectives, the program has only been able to provide, on an average, 48 days of work. Only 14 per cent of households have received 100 days of work. Dr. Jadhav noted that though for a country of the magnitude of size and population of India it is not possible to have uniform performance, there is still much room for improvement. Major issues in program implementation include lack of adequately trained personnel, delays in payment and poor quality of work undertaken. The Right to Information Act has helped people to be informed about the program and assert their right to seek work from the government. A unique way of monitoring the program has been the introduction of ‘social audits’, which have been successfully implemented in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Since the early 1970s, the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) have been in place for the scheduled castes and tribal groups who comprise 16.2 percent and 8.2 percent of the population respectively. According to these plans, separate funds are allocated for the welfare of these groups in the Annual Plans of the Federal Ministries and State Ministries according to the proportion of these populations at the national and state levels. Over the years, implementation of the state level programs has been better than the federal programs. In recent times, action is being taken to strengthen these programs at the national and state levels.

The Food Security Act, which is in the process of being drafted, aims to provide basic nutrition as a legal entitlement for 78 percent of the families. The entitled families will be subdivided into priority families and non-priority families. Priority families will receive 35 kilograms per month each of rice, wheat and millet at Rs. 3, Rs. 2 and Rs.1 per kilogram respectively. The non-priority sector families will receive these food items at 50 percent of the minimum support price prevalent at that time. The Prime Minister has appointed a National Advisory Council to work out the details of the implementation of this Act.

Discussion
Commenting on the educational policies in Bhutan, it was highlighted that it was only in the 1960s that modern education commenced. Since then people have realized the value of educating their children and about 15 percent of the annual budget is spent on education. It was stated that the draft Food Security Act in India intends to replace other programs such as
BPL and APL (ration cards), which have many limitations, including exclusion errors\textsuperscript{11} in targeting. The main purpose of introducing the Food Security Act is to create a buffer for the poor against the rising cost of food prices. The Food Security Act also takes into account the nutritional needs of infants in the first 30 months of life.

Elaborating on the MGNREGA, it was highlighted that it is not a targeted program but a demand driven program, where households have the right to demand work from the government. It is the “demonstration of democracy at work.” The Right to Information Act has enabled social audits to be undertaken which have discovered misappropriated funds and led to the recovery of money. In Andhra Pradesh, four crores of rupees were recovered through social audits. It was pointed out that there are other affirmative programs that have been designed to meet the needs of scheduled castes and tribal groups in India, such as separate quotas for employment. These specific steps have been created to ensure inclusiveness in policies.

With reference to payment of old age allowance in Bangladesh, it was explained that allowances for the elderly commenced in 1998 and thereafter have been gradually expanded. They cover both men and women who are below the poverty line. NGOs in Bangladesh work closely with the government in providing social protection to the population.

\textsuperscript{11} An exclusion error is observed when a household which is part of the program’s target population does not receive the program’s benefits.
Session 3: Social Protection Schemes for Migrants and the Urban Poor

Chair: Mr. Denys Correll, Executive Director, International Council on Social Welfare
Panelists: Dr. Asad Sayeed, Collective for Social Science Research, Pakistan; Dr. Darshini Mahadevia, Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology University (CEPT), India; Dr. Shiva Sharma, Executive-Director, National Labour Academy, Nepal; Mr. Andrea Rossi, Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia; Mr. Richard Danziger, Chief of Mission, IOM, Sri Lanka

This session wished to highlight the complex case of migrants and the urban poor, as a population which is especially vulnerable and is excluded from most social protection schemes in South Asia. In particular, the focus was on the lack of access to portable social protection benefits for moving populations. Migrants constitute a “floating” population, as they alternate between living at their home and host location, and in turn lose access to social security benefits linked to the residence. The Human Development Report (2009) reveals that Asia displays the highest intra regional migration in the world, with approximately thirty five and a half million persons (35.49 million) moving across Asian countries. The urban poor are another neglected group, faced with insecure housing and poor access to health, social services, and education opportunities. The session highlighted the plight of these excluded groups. It also attempted to identify new areas of research needed and to recommend specific measures to be taken.

Mr. Denys Correll, Executive Director, International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), stated at the outset that this meeting is very important for working towards a common agenda on social protection for the South Asian region. While briefly describing the work of his organization, he elaborated that ICSW is a world-wide NGO committed to social development. It works closely with academia and researchers, since it strongly believes that policies should be evidence based.

Dr. Asad Sayeed, Collective for Social Science Research, Pakistan stressed the need for policy-oriented research that can lead to effective social protection policies for migrants and the urban poor. It was stated that a large proportion of migrants in Pakistan rural to urban migrants. The most recent migrants are the poorest and in need of social protection. The urban migrants are often disadvantaged with regard to shelter and are also affected by poor environmental sanitation, which in turn affects their health. In addition, regionally and internally displaced people, as well as international migrants, tend to be concentrated in urban areas. Recent floods and the earthquake have made the situation worse and pushed more people to urban areas. Furthermore, in urban areas, due to the demand for land by upper and middle class households, the eviction of the poor is common. It was also observed that cash transfers have less value for the urban poor as staple foods have higher prices in the urban areas.

Rural to rural and seasonal migrants are another vulnerable group who are chronically poor. They are politically the most disenfranchised and tend not to be registered for benefits at the
place of destination. While creation of social protection registries is happening, the counting of migrants still poses problems. Another segment who is in need of social protection is street children, who comprise about 1.5 million. These children need protection as well as rehabilitation. Protection needed by transnational migrants with weak citizen rights, would require international and regional cooperation.

Dr. Darshini Mahadevia, Professor, Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology University (CEPT), India, noted in her presentation that research has shown that access to housing and employment are among the biggest challenges faced by urban migrants. As articulated in the National Housing Policy 1992, of India, “Shelter and development are mutually supportive. Housing forms an important part of the strategy of the Government for the alleviation of poverty and employment generation, and is to be viewed as an integral part of the overall improvement of human settlements and economic development.” Dr Mahadevia pointed out that in 2004 - 2005 in India, 25.7 percent or 81 million urban residents were below the poverty line (consuming below 2100 kilocalories per day). In 2001, nearly 43 million persons or 15 per cent of the population were living in slums. In 2002, only 58 percent of urban households had access to basic facilities and only 31 percent of households had exclusive household level access to a water supply. Also, 18 percent of urban households had no access to a latrine and defecated in the open, while 33 percent of the bottom half of income group households defecated in the open. Seventy four percent of male workers and 65 percent of female workers in urban areas work in the informal sector.

Studies in Gujarat show that the definition of urban citizen varies for different programs. To benefit from the Construction Worker’s Act, an eligible worker has to have domicile in Gujarat. For shelter rehabilitation, the household should have resided in Gujarat for 25 years. Similarly, in Mumbai and New Delhi, to be eligible for the entitlement to basic needs the required duration of stay varies and often dates back to more than 20 years, thereby depriving the more recent migrants to the city of these facilities. Numerous proofs of identity such as a ration card, photo ID card, bank passbook, election card, and electricity bill etc, are prerequisites to access basic services in urban areas, and obtaining these documents in the first place can often prove extremely difficult. In many local governments a positive development has been that basic services are being provided to the urban poor irrespective of their legal status.

Nevertheless, new migrants to the cities often find shelter in squatter camps and informal settlements. However, when they squat on public land reserved for other uses, there is a high threat of eviction. The route of incremental housing, through a pro-active local state, is seen as the most feasible option for ‘inclusive urbanization’ in India. It was also pointed out that one could learn from the South Asian experiences of Singapore and Hong Kong where priority was given to shelter security in the early stages of development.

Dr. Shiva Sharma, Executive-Director, National Labour Academy, while reviewing the literature on in-country migration in Nepal explained that there are predominantly two types of migrant workers, individuals and families. A large proportion of the internal migration is mostly to urban areas and market centers. The migrant workers to urban areas are largely comprised by the
youth. It has been observed that 53 percent of male youth and 86 percent of female youth migrate within the country. The main reason for rural to urban migration is mainly due to the push factor of poverty.

The youth who migrate to urban areas often end up in informal sector employment such as street vending, in brick kilns, on construction sites and as domestic workers and workers in tea shops. Therefore, gradual legal enforcement is required to protect these workers, such as registering them, providing them with the necessary skills training to graduate into formal sector employment and enhancing their employability. Other possibilities include setting up a social protection fund for informal sector workers and unionizing them. Social protection for migrant families needs special attention, especially for the women and children of these families. Further research is needed to ascertain the health, education and credit status of these migrants.

Mr. Andrea Rossi, Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia stated that until recently there was no clear idea of how many children migrate. Although data is now available, in South Asia, this data is largely hidden. According to the United Nations, the international migration of young persons under age 20 is about 20 percent, with the highest number of migrants being adolescents aged 5-14 years. Most of the migration is South-South and most migration of children under 5 years of age takes place with families as a coping strategy due to shocks experienced at the place of origin. However for adolescents, migration also occurs to obtain a better education, health provision, income generation and generally for a better life. Migrant children are the most vulnerable and are treated differently from the non-migrant children of the area, despite the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which declares that states shall respect and ensure rights to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind.

Living in a family with at least one parent away for long periods is part of the normal experience of childhood for many children in the developing world. In Bangladesh, between 18 and 40 percent of rural households have at least one migrant member living and working elsewhere. In all South Asian countries remittances from migrants is greater than the amount spent by the governments on social protection programs. Thus, according to Mr. Rossi, “migration may be seen as a means of providing social protection to vulnerable families”. As such, migration may be viewed as a social protection strategy, though it was cautioned that remittances should not replace public social interventions. The income and livelihood effects on household members left behind depends on the level of income that migrants earn, the extent to which they send remittances back and how they are used in the household. Research has shown that receiving remittances always has a significant impact on reducing low birth weight. Further it was observed that migrant members of the household bring back not only financial resources but also new information and values that may have a positive effect on children.

Mr. Richard Danziger, Chief of Mission, International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Sri Lanka noted that most countries in South Asia are places of origin, destination and transit. In Sri Lanka, he stated that the remittances of international migrants, numbering about 2 million
people out of a population of 20 million, constitute a vital source of foreign exchange to the country. However, he also noted that migration should not be seen as a source of economic benefit alone and that its social costs also need to be taken account. There are three areas of importance (i) the social protection of those who migrate internationally (ii) social protection for the children left behind and (c) social protection for migrants on their return. It is not the poorest who migrate internationally, although those who go abroad often do so to pay off their debts.

The foreign employment bureau’s policies and programs, with regard to social protection for children and return migrants are good, though not for migrants who go abroad. Foreign investment coming into countries in the region should contribute to the creation of domestic employment opportunities and reduce migration for foreign employment. In this regard, a regional agreement for minimum wages would be required. There is also the need to undertake research on the social costs of international migration examining both the positive and negative aspects. It is important to design migration policies based on evidence, and the formulation of a migration and health policy in Sri Lanka is a good example of such an initiative.

Discussion
In the discussion it was noted that there is a lack of migration policies for internal migrants, urban to rural and cross border migrants. Attention also needs to be given to the disabled and forced migrants due to natural and man-made disasters. It was pointed out that it is important to identify the positive and negative aspects of migration and maximize the positive aspects while minimizing the negative factors. One example that could be considered to promote international migration as a social protection strategy would be to provide multiple entry visas to mothers so that they can return home at least twice a year. This would have many benefits for family members. With regard to forced migration, it was noted that there are already many safety nets and therefore, the focus should be on voluntary migrants who are greater in number and have little or no social protection. It was highlighted that the informal sector urban migrants generally have some social capital as they tend to live in communities of the same caste or ethnic group.
Session 4: Ministerial Roundtable on the Ministerial Declaration

**Chair:** Ms. Pilar Álvarez-Laso, UNESCO Assistant Director-General of Social and Human Sciences

**Participants:** Hon. Ms. Amena S. Afzali, Minister of Work and Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled, Afghanistan; Hon. Mr. Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shaheed, Minister of Social Welfare; Mr. Tshewang Tandin, Director General, Ministry of Education, Bhutan; Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India; Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Family, Maldives; Ms. Bindra Hada, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal; Hon. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka.

The purpose of the ministerial roundtable was for the Ministers and their delegation to discuss and approve a draft Ministerial Declaration to be adopted at the end of the Forum. The objective of the Declaration is to highlight the issues of inequalities and social justice and the means of mitigating them through social protection policies. The draft aimed to outline concrete measures, which reflected the recommendations proposed by researchers and the key national and regional priorities identified by the participating Ministers.

Ms. Pilar Álvarez-Laso, UNESCO Assistant Director-General of Social and Human Sciences, stated at the outset that the purpose of the roundtable is to discuss and approve the draft Ministerial Declaration that is to be adopted at the end of the Forum. The objective of the Declaration she noted, is to highlight issues of inequality and social justice and the means of mitigating them through social protection policies. The draft Declaration aims to outline concrete commitments, which would reflect the recommendations proposed by researchers and the key national and regional priorities identified by the participating Ministers and their representatives.

Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Family, Maldives stressed the need to allocate more funding for social issues and undertake more research to identify the impact of social programs on the welfare of the people, so that an indirect cost of not investing in social protection programs could be estimated.

Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India, fully endorsed the draft document and stated that higher education institutions should be encouraged to undertake social science research, and suggested that this should be included in the Colombo Declaration.

Hon. Ms. Amena S. Afzali, Minister of Work and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, Afghanistan, stressed the need for research particularly on gender violence, and added that this should be included in the Declaration as a commitment.

Ms. Yamuna Chitranganie, Secretary, Ministry of Social Services, speaking on behalf of Hon. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, noted that the availability of funds for social services is limited and therefore, research should demonstrate the benefits of investments in
social services. She also pointed out that a draft *National Family Policy* has been formulated with focus on vulnerable members in a family setting.

**Ms. Bindra Hada**, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal, emphasized the need to streamline social protection programs under a single coordinating body.

**Mr. Moshiur Rahman**, Director General, Department of Social Services, Bangladesh speaking on behalf of Hon. Mr. Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shaheed, Minister of Social Welfare, stated that his country fully supports the declaration and also stressed the need to establish mechanisms to coordinate social protection programs.

**Mr. Tshewang Tandin**, Director General, Ministry of Education, Bhutan, stated that the draft declaration is very useful as it is consistent with social protection efforts in his country at present. He stated that while research is important, programs may need to be implemented even when research evidence is not available.

5. **TUESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2011**

Session 5: Panel Discussion - A Social Protection Floor for South Asia?

**Chair:** Mr. Markus Ruck, Senior Specialist on Social Security, Decent Work Team, International Labour Organization (ILO – South Asia)

**Panelists:** Dr. Firdosi Rustom Mehta, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative to Sri Lanka; Mr. A. S. Shenoy, National President, International Council of Social Welfare, India; Prof. Ravi Srivastava, Professor of Economics & Chairperson, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University

The session was devoted to discussing the principles supporting the Social Protection Floor Initiative and its practical eligibility in the South Asian region. The UN Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPFI) promotes universal access to an essential set of services (such as education, water and sanitation, food and adequate nutrition, health and housing) and transfers (in cash and in kind) to provide a minimum income and livelihood security for the poor and vulnerable populations, in line with human rights treaties. This session proposed the exchange of ideas and experiences of the participating countries in building, expanding and re-orienting existing schemes towards the realization of a social protection floor for South Asia. This would entail raising awareness, identifying viable policy options, elaborating country specific measures to facilitate ownership of the initiative by national governments, social partners and NGOs.

**Mr. Markus Ruck**, Senior Specialist on Social Security, Decent Work Team, International Labour Organization (ILO-South Asia), made an introductory presentation on the Social Protection Floor Initiative. He noted that in April 2009 the Chief Executives Board (CEB) of the UN agreed on
nine joint initiatives to confront the global financial crisis and accelerate recovery and pave the way for a fairer and more sustainable globalization. One of the nine initiatives is the Social Protection Floor. While pointing out the necessity of social security, Mr. Ruck noted that 80% of people live in social insecurity and 20% in abject poverty. He remarked “social security transfers are a powerful tool to reduce poverty and inequality and to achieve the MDGs. Social security benefits are also widely recognized as social and economic stabilizers in times of crisis”. All socially and economically stable societies have extensive social security systems. The nature and objective of the Social Protection Floor, at its core, is the building of a coalition of international agencies and donors, enabling countries to plan and implement sustainable social transfer schemes.

The United Nations suggests that a social protection floor could consist of two main elements: (i) Services: geographical and financial access to essential services such as water and sanitation, health, and education (ii) Transfers: a basic set of essential social transfers, in cash and in kind, as aid to the poor and vulnerable to provide minimum income security and facilitate access to essential services.

Mr. Ruck noted that the ILO is already promoting the social transfer component of the social protection floor, entailing a basic set of essential social guarantees, realized through transfers in cash and in kind, that could ensure (i) universal access to essential health services (ii) income security for all children through family/child benefits (iii) income support combined with employment guarantees through public works programs for the working-age poor and (iv) income security through basic tax-financed pensions for the old, the disabled and those who have lost the main breadwinner in a family. Mr. Ruck explained that these four components comprise the floor or the first step in the Social Security Development Staircase, with the second step of the staircase including mandatory social insurance, social security benefits of guaranteed levels for contributors and the final step being that of voluntary insurance. The Social Protection Floor Initiative has been met with great enthusiasm and support from governments, social partners, civil society and UN agencies. The concept is widely endorsed and is developing into an accepted component of the overall social development strategy in the UN system, transcending the mandate of any individual agency. Mr. Ruck pointed out that sustained advocacy efforts would be needed to ensure the social protection floor remains on the development agenda and is carried forward.

Mr. A.S. Shenoy, National President, International Council on Social Welfare, India, stated in his presentation that the Social Protection Floor Initiative should focus on the vulnerable populations. He noted that in India, there are 450 million workers in the informal sector who receive low wages and have job insecurity. He also pointed out that the Right to Education Act and Right to Information Act would greatly facilitate the Social Protection Floor Initiative. Mr. Shenoy was of the view that while the basic needs approach to social protection is welcome, it is essential to make sure that there are effective delivery systems to provide the services. Awareness of the right to social protection should be strengthened in collaboration with civil society organizations. The continuity of programs, and the introduction of social audits to
ensure that the most vulnerable groups of society benefit, are essential to make social protection initiatives successful.

**Dr. Firdosi Rustom Mehta**, World Health Organization Representative to Sri Lanka, stated that Sri Lanka has had an impressive development trajectory, since over the past few decades it has made several achievements in the field of social development. Some of the important factors contributing to this success are the high literacy among women, a wide network of health and educational institutions, and the willingness of the mother to give high value to education and health care for her children. Areas of concern, however, remain and include malnutrition among children, relatively high proportion of low birth weights (16%) and the increasing incidence of non-communicable diseases. Though life expectancy is high, there is an eight year gap between males and females in favor of females. The main reason for higher death rates for males is non-communicable diseases. Thus he noted, a healthy work force, should be the cornerstone of the Social Protection Floor Initiative.

**Prof. Ravi Srivastava**, Professor of Economics & Chairperson, Centre for the Study of Regional Development (JNU), was of the opinion that the Social Protection Floor should include two other facets namely, inclusive and distributive growth. He noted that social protection mechanisms are seen by some to be in conflict with market economy mechanisms. According to Prof Srivastava, three pillars can be identified within the Social Protection Floor (i) Minimum conditions for work (ii) National minimum level of social security and (iii) Livelihood promotion. Each country should have a national minimum level of social security. For instance, in India, the National Health Insurance Program\(^\text{12}\) covers about 20 million people, which is the size of Sri Lanka’s population.

Prof. Srivastava pointed out that after two and a half decades of sustained economic growth, India is now in a position to implement social protection initiatives. At present, there are numerous programs which exist in India that need to be strengthened and further expanded. In addition to the National Health Insurance Program, there is the *Right to Education* Act, the *Unorganized Sector Social Security Act*, the *National Rural Livelihoods Mission*, the *Food Security Act* (etc.). However, there are also gaps such as the lack of a policy on minimum conditions of work and on shelter. Some issues that the Social Protection Floor Initiative needs to look into and incorporate are issues of finance, governance, implementation strategies and political will.

The Social Protection Floor Initiative is not a static concept and Prof Srivastava noted that as the countries in the region advance economically, they can graduate and develop appropriate social insurance policies. Thus more research is needed in the area of the Social Protection Floor. It is also necessary to move towards a rights-based approach with priorities for vulnerable groups within the Social Protection Floor Initiative.

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\(^{12}\) The National Health Insurance Program of India, known as Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) provides health insurance coverage for Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, giving them protection from financial liabilities arising out of health shocks that involve hospitalization.
Discussion
It was stated that a universal, minimum level of social protection is necessary as a basic human right and within this, vulnerable groups should be given priority. While discussing the targeted approach in extension of social protection, it was observed that it is possible to eliminate the upper income segments of the population and thus programs can be financially viable in the context of limited resources. However, it was pointed out that the main issue with targeting is that it can lead to political interference in the selection of beneficiaries. The need for viewing social development as an investment for economic growth was emphasized. While coordinating between UN agencies is difficult, it was concluded that efforts must be made to come together and commit towards social protection goals. Nevertheless it was acknowledged that social protection programs are best implemented when they are government driven. It is also necessary to set up rapid assessment protocols to periodically assess the social protection programs. It was noted that a capability specific approach is desirable in designing a regional program on social protection.

Session 6: Country Experiences: Learning and Sharing: Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka

**Speakers:** Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Family, Maldives; Ms. Bindra Hada, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal; Hon. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka

**Moderator:** Ms. Elizabeth Longworth, UNESCO Deputy Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences and Director of Social Research Policy

Each country presentation focused on the most innovative, exemplary or successful national social protection scheme. The session discussed each country’s experience with a few selected schemes, while keeping a particular focus on means of implementation, provisions for transparency and accountability, and results achieved. With reference to country experiences, in the Maldives, the Absolute Poverty Scheme, Universal Old Age Pension Scheme and vouchers for textbooks and uniforms for children have been noteworthy initiatives. In Nepal, a universal old age pension, grants for building social and physical infrastructure, Maternity Incentive Scheme, and the Education for All program are among the social protection interventions. The Samurdhi program in Sri Lanka is unique since it encompasses different components of social protection in its strategy such as a savings and credit program, income transfer and the development of community infrastructure through trainings, workfare and social development programs.

**Mr. Felix Perera,** Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka, stated in his presentation that Sri Lanka has a long history of social protection programs. Some of the important programs are: Free education from primary to university level for the entire population; free health services for the entire population; *Samurdhi*, the national poverty alleviation program; allowances for families with persons with disabilities; a nutrition package for pregnant and lactating mothers; housing assistance for persons with disabilities; mandatory non-contributory pension scheme for public
servants and mandatory contributory widows and orphans pension schemes; programs for informal workers (farmer’s, fishermen and self-employed contributory pension schemes), Public Servants Provident Fund, Employees Provident Fund, Employees Trust Fund and approved Private Provident Funds. Further, under the Ministry of Social Services, there are different institutions that have been set up that conduct specifically tailored programs for vulnerable groups such as children with special needs, elderly, disabled and destitute populations.

Elaborating on the Samurdhi National Poverty Alleviation Program, Mr. Perera described that it is a food stamp and cash transfer program that benefits 1.6 million families, approximately 30 percent of the population. Started in 1995, its objective is to provide financial assistance to families living below the poverty line for maintaining a minimum standard of living. Social protection programs in Sri Lanka have indeed had an impact on the population and this is observable through the following: the population living on below US $1 a day is 5.6 percent. The male and female literacy rates are over 90 percent. Life expectancy at birth for males is 70 years and for females is 78 years. The poverty head count index has declined from 22.7 in 2002 to 7.6 in 2009.

Some challenges faced in the implementation of targeted social protection programs include the insufficient budgetary allocations, insufficient beneficiary packages, problems with identification of target groups due to lack of data and political interference and duplication of programs by central and provincial authorities. Mr. Perera pointed out that there is also projected to be an increase in the aged population in the coming years, which will require attention.

Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Family, Maldives, stated in her presentation that the objectives of social protection schemes in the Maldives are to provide a minimal social package to the vulnerable populations and socially excluded groups for equitable access to health care, social security, social protection services and a better socio-economic status. The benefits include financial allowances to the disabled, single parents, foster parents and the elderly. The old age allowances are universal but they have contributory and non-contributory components.

The social health insurance program, known as Madhana, provides yearly coverage of MVR 100,000 or approximately USD 6,500 within the Maldives for a contribution of MVR 2,000 or approximately USD 130. The government contributes this amount fully for civil service employees and government pensioners, the elderly aged more than 65 years and registered absolute poverty population groups. There are currently 67,000 beneficiaries of the Madhana service. The health coverage is open to migrant workers as well. A trust fund for vulnerable children also exists to provide emergency relief for child victims of abuse and to cover transportation costs to remove children from vulnerable situations. The beneficiaries receive these allowances through the banking system.

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13 Currency of Maldives, the Maldivian Rufiyaa (Rf).
In the Maldives, there is political commitment to implement the social protection floor, and government policies have proven to be transformative by changing the problems of congestion, increasing employment opportunities, strengthening family ties, addressing drug issues and fostering decentralization (local governance). Transparency and accountability is mandated by law, and in addition, implementation criteria are set through multi-sectoral stakeholder involvements, with the schemes being subject to procedures and standards. Some of the challenges facing the programs include reaching vulnerable groups who are not eligible for existing programs (e.g. victims of domestic violence, patients with mental disorders), inequity issues between urban and rural populations, increasing unemployment among the youth, an increase in child sexual abuse, a lack of knowledge and awareness about social protection schemes and the lack of proper data management and monitoring systems.

Ms. Bindra Hada, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal, noted in her presentation that despite the impressive success in poverty reduction during the past decade, poverty and deprivation remain persistent challenges in Nepal. Socio-economic indicators reveal highly uneven distribution of poverty and deprivations, with social exclusion remaining a serious challenge. There is poor delivery and coverage of social services and conflict has had its impact on the general population.

Over the years, the government-led social protection initiatives have focused mainly on five areas: (i) Pensions and social insurance mainly aimed at formal sector employees; (ii) Social transfer programs which include, grants to conflict affected children and families, universal old age pensions for people above 70 years, cash transfers to endangered ethnic communities, disability allowances, maternity incentives including free checkups and medicine, free child delivery service and cash transfer before and after delivery, and child grants to children under age 5, to poor Dalit children and children in Karnali; (iii) Labor market interventions like labor laws and byelaws vocational and skill development training; (iv) Social care programs for children and the elderly; (v) Poverty alleviation and social empowerment programs aimed at various marginalized communities and women.

The total expenditure on social protection in Nepal is about 2 percent of the GDP. The government has been increasingly aware of the need to expand the coverage of social protection measures to reduce income and non-income risks and other vulnerabilities and to promote human development. Thus in 2009, a National Steering Committee on Social Protection was formed. It included eight ministries and had the objective “of ensuring access of all citizens to the basic, minimum social protection by creating an inclusive, equitable and consolidated social protection system”. The framework developed by this Committee was guided by the principles of reducing poverty and vulnerability, promoting social inclusion and justice, ensuring complementarities and synergies in interventions, ensuring optimal use of resources, emphasis on quality of delivery along with access and promoting peace and social cohesion.

14 Karnali zone in the Mid-Western Development Region of Nepal is one of the poorest and most remote regions of Nepal.
The Steering Committee has noted challenges in the existing programs, including the following: (i) current social protection efforts are more welfare based rather than rights based; (ii) social protection efforts are viewed as ‘safety nets’ not as an ‘investment’ in human capital; (iii) social and economic goals are considered as trade-offs and it is often presumed that social goals can tax economic prospects; (iv) programs are initiated at the political level without much prior analysis of their administrative feasibility and financial sustainability; (v) no precise statistics on vulnerability exist and no information is available on the impacts of different programs; (vi) scattered initiatives exist, implemented through diverse agencies, without proper linkages and coordination and without a thought through strategy to ensure integration, harmonization and complementarities between stakeholders.

The National Steering Committee on Social Protection has therefore proposed the following priorities in Nepal’s Social Protection Floor for the next ten years: Expanding child grants with promotional linkages to nutrition and other services; free education up to secondary level; employment promotion schemes; continuing and consolidating a social pension for senior citizens, people with disability, single women, and endangered communities; ensuring food security and free essential health services. A key next step for the National Steering Committee is to work out an institutional and financial strategy and reformulate and revise the Social Protection Act and byelaws.

Additionally, a Social Security Task Force has been established under the Ministry of Finance and includes representatives from ministries, business communities and trade to strengthen a contributory social security system, in line with ILO Convention 102. The Government has introduced 1 percent social security tax for all formal sector employees, and is considering the option of establishing an integrated social security fund. Development Partners Social Protection Task Team, chaired by UNICEF and ILO, is providing technical support to the Government of Nepal towards developing a National Framework on Social Protection.

**Discussion**

In the discussion it was highlighted that, in Nepal, duplication of benefits to beneficiaries are being avoided by bringing all social protection programs under a single coordinating body. It was pointed out that small grants of Rs. 500 to families with children under five years old in Nepal, would not act as an incentive to have large families and encourage fertility. While commenting on the difficulties of providing pensions to the elderly in remote areas, it was elaborated that this is undertaken through the lowest level of the government administrative system in villages in Nepal and through the mobile banking system in the Maldives. Some of the priority topics identified, in which research is needed from a political point of view, included the estimation of the cost of not investing in social protection programs and the collection of accurate data on vulnerable populations.
Session 7: Panel Discussion- Employment-led Strategies for Social Protection in South Asia

Chair: Prof. Rizwanul Islam, Former Special Advisor, Employment Sector, ILO Geneva
Panellists: Dr. Naushin Mahmood, Professor, Institute of Development Economics, Pakistan; Dr. Bishwa Nath Tiwari, Professor, Tribhuvan University, Nepal; Dr. Nisha Arunatilake, Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka; Mr. Ashok Sahu, Senior Advisor, Labour & Employment, Planning Commission, Government of India

The predominance of the informal segment of the economy characterized by growing unemployment in the South Asian region reveals the importance of employment-led social protection policies, aimed at achieving higher economic and social development in the region. Employment-centered public works programs have been traditionally preferred as they focus simultaneously on investment in infrastructure and creation of employment opportunities. This session proposes to analyze examples of employment-led schemes in South Asia such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, India (2006), the launch of the 100 Day Employment Generation Program in Bangladesh (2008), and the Employment Guarantee Program in Nepal, amongst others. The session will provide a platform for the participating countries to share their experiences in implementation, of administrative modalities, modes of financing and difficulties faced, in order to strengthen regional cooperation for such schemes.

Prof. Rizwanul Islam, former Special Advisor, Employment Sector, ILO Geneva, made a presentation on the analysis of employment-led strategies for social protection with a South Asian perspective. At the outset, he noted that South Asian countries, despite having moderate to high rates of economic growth, have shown a slow rate of structural transformation of the labor market, resulting in a persistence of surplus labor manifested in the form of unemployment and under employment. In addition, he observed that the informal sector of the economy and the labor market predominates and open unemployment has been increasing in most South Asian countries.

According to Prof. Islam, the definition of social protection basically includes protection from multi-dimensional deprivations (eg. old age, ill health, unemployment etc.). The ILO Convention No.102 (1952) covers nine areas for social insurance including medical care, sickness benefits, old age, employment injury, family size, maternity, invalidity and widowhood. The ILO’s World Report 2000 identified the following components of social protection: social insurance (contributory), social assistance (tax-financed, for those with low incomes), public schemes, private non-statutory schemes, and employment guarantee as a form of unemployment insurance. The Asian Development Bank definition of social protection encompasses the population at large, not only workers, and outlines five kinds of activities within its ambit: labor market policies and programs, social insurance programs, social assistance, micro and area-based schemes and child protection.
With these definitions there has emerged a broad based notion of social protection comprising the core measures of social security (social insurance), social assistance in the form of unconditional transfers (mostly tax financed), conditional transfers (labor market and other development programs), and complementary development interventions (eg. micro credit). At the country level, there are examples of employment-led strategies for social protection, for instance, the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in India and the Food for Works Program, Rural Maintenance Program, Rural Infrastructure Program, 100 day Employment Program and the Employment Program for the Hard Core Poor in Bangladesh.

There is some ambivalence about the objective of employment programs, whether they serve as employment based safety nets or whether they promote labor intensive infrastructure for development. An important prerequisite for safety net programs to graduate into development programs is rigorous planning and implementation of schemes and allocation of resources between labor and materials.

A positive aspect of the employment based approach is that it covers people who cannot be covered by conventional measures. It is useful in situations with low employment intensity of growth, it can act as an automatic stabilizer during economic downturns and it can contribute to economic growth when linked to infrastructure development programs.

Some limitations however are that it cannot cover those who are not in the labor force (eg. the elderly) and it cannot act as an automatic stabilizer for workers who are not suitable for manual labor in infrastructure projects. Often such programs are subject to political uncertainty unless guaranteed by legislation. Employment based social protection programs need to examine the costs of implementation and their sustainability.

**Dr. Naushin Mahmood**, Professor, Institute of Development Economics, Pakistan, in her presentation on employment-led social protection in Pakistan, stated that macro-economic instability, high inflation, budget deficit and rising debt are major constraining factors in increasing productive employment, especially for vulnerable groups. In addition, there is the large size of the labor force engaged in the informal sector, which is inadequately covered by social protection measures. The poor condition of employment-led policies for social protection have been further compounded by the following factors: Bulk of unskilled and less educated new entrants entering the labor market, low absorptive capacity of formal sector employment; the recent global financial crises and the consequent social and economic impact on households in terms of increasing unemployment and their vulnerability; plus a host of other factors such as political unrest, natural disasters, pervasive poverty and the war on terror.

Dr. Mahmood noted that with a working population of over 100 million, the need to devise specific employment-led strategies in Pakistan is pertinent, especially seen in the context of a young population, demonstrating that Pakistan is at the threshold of reaping the “demographic dividend”. The Medium Term Development Framework (MTDF), 2005-10 incorporated strategies on employment generation and poverty reduction and also goals and targets for an
employment-led expansionary approach in both the public and private sectors. A growth oriented National Employment Policy was formulated in 2008 with strategies to address unemployment and poverty issues. Also, the 100 Days Programme of employment for the needy, the President’s Rozgar Scheme, the National Internship Program (NIP) for deserving educated youth and the Khushal Pakistan Program, Rural Support Program have been other recent initiatives undertaken by the Government.

The Benazir Income Support Program, with an allocated budget of Rs. 34 billion to provide monthly cash support of Rs. 1,000 to 3.5 million targeted households of the vulnerable and marginalized population has also been launched. The program has since been extended to cover 7 million poor families. Further, a national program to meet the impacts of the financial crisis by providing alternative means of income and employment generation, through partnerships between the government, NGOs, and community-based organizations, has also been initiated. An expansion of the micro-finance schemes to assist in small scale economic activities and create self-employment opportunities has additionally taken place. With strong inter-linkages between growth, employment and poverty issues, development strategies and policy framework need to reorient and redefine measures of social protection to encompass the informal sector of the economy in Pakistan.

Dr. Bishwa Nath Tiwari, Professor, Tribhuvan University, Nepal, presenting the case study of Nepal, elaborated on a broader view of social protection considering that recently there has been a shift in the focus of social protection, from its narrow view based on traditional role of social insurance and social assistance, to a broader one encompassing social policy for poverty reduction and human development. The social protection programs implemented in Nepal are social insurance (pension, provident fund, gratuity extending to 0.5 million formal sector workers); social assistance (for sections such as senior citizens, women and children, widowers, Dalits and indigenous groups); sectoral transfers (health, education); emergency social protection transfers, such as the Prime Minister’s Disaster Relief Fund; block grants to the villages and districts and employment programs.

While public expenditure on social protection has been increasing, rising under-employment and unemployment remain the main issues in Nepal. As a result, on a daily basis about 1,000 persons migrate to foreign countries for employment and thus, migration has decreased the productive capacity of the economy. The employment programs available for the vulnerable include the Food for Work Program (Rural Community Infrastructure Work), Karnali Employment Program and the Poverty Alleviation Fund. The Rural Community Infrastructure Work Program was started in 1996 as a food for work program; however it changed its approach from short-term employment and food security to long term food security and livelihoods, and from food only to both food and cash for work projects. Its focus was on the poor and women. The Karnali Employment Program is implemented in 5 districts and guarantees employment for one member of each family.
The Poverty Alleviation Fund covers 25 districts. The target groups are poor women, Madhesi, Dalits, ethnic groups and backward groups. Activities include skill development training, self-employment, income generation and infrastructure development. Other employment programs include the Churia Food for Work Program that was initiated in 1992 (to address drought and declining production) and the Youth Self-employment Program, which has not succeeded to a great extent. An employment guarantee program of 100 days for people below the poverty line is also being formulated.

**Dr. Nisha Arunatilake**, Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies, Sri Lanka, in her comments focused on discussing the pros and cons of employment-led strategies and their relevance for social protection in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has some employment-led social protection programs. Under Samurdhi, Sri Lanka’s main social safety net program, various types of employment related assistance, such as technical support and micro finance, is given to beneficiaries. However, this type of assistance is only available for those below the poverty line families who are Samurdhi beneficiaries. As the entry and exit to the program is long term, it is mostly the chronic poor who benefit from these programs. In the past the government has provided public works types of assistance to those who were affected by disasters. During times of natural disasters such as the tsunami and the recently experienced floods, the government provided workfare programs to support the incomes of those affected. However, these programs are implemented on an ad-hoc basis.

While elaborating on the state of job security, Dr. Arunatilake commented that the formal sector workers in Sri Lanka have extensive job protection in the country. Public sector workers almost never lose their jobs. Private sector workers receive large compensations when retrenched, which amounts to more than the unemployment benefits received by most in other countries. The same type of protection is not available to those in the informal sector in Sri Lanka. Given the above observations, MGNREGA type employment based programs can be a solution to the problem of providing security to informal sector workers who experience drops in their income flow due to vulnerabilities such as natural disasters, thus serving as social protection for the transitory poor. Further the design of the scheme allows for the identification of beneficiaries (through self-selection) and as such the most deserving are likely to benefit through the program.

While analyzing the relevance of employment guarantee in Sri Lanka, she commented, “MGNREGA type programs are mostly suitable for informal sector workers who are blue collar workers”. However, in Sri Lanka not all informal sector workers are blue-collar workers and include those who have their own businesses such as skilled agricultural and fishery workers, crafts and related workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers, and other occupations. Workers are faced with a variety of vulnerabilities, for instance, natural risks (e.g., floods, droughts, earthquakes, etc.), health risks (e.g., illnesses, injury, disability), life cycle risks (e.g., births, deaths, old-age), social and political risks (e.g., crime, domestic violence, riots) and

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15 Madhesi are the native people of Nepal who reside in the southern, plains region of the Terai, in Nepal, also referred to as Madhesh.
economic risks (e.g., unemployment, harvest failure, business failure, etc.). According to Dr. Arunatilake “the MGNREGA type program is designed mainly for those who are affected by natural risks, and perhaps those affected by social-political or economic risks”. She noted that the design of the program will not help those who are affected by life cycle risks or health risks.

In conclusion, the MGNREGA type job guarantee schemes would need to be supplemented by other livelihood related insurance schemes.

Mr. Ashok Sahu, Senior Advisor, Labour and Employment, Planning Commission, Government of India, commenting on the Indian experience remarked “providing and protecting employment and increasing employability is the essence of the employment-led strategy for social protection”. India has had the experience in the past of implementing employment oriented relief work programs such as the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme, besides various other self employment and wage employment schemes such as the Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY), an employment-oriented urban poverty alleviation scheme, and the Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Program (PMEGP), for generating self-employment by providing credit linked subsidy for the setting up of micro enterprises.

Of late, the right to work as guaranteed by the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, (MGNREGA), 2005, embodies the employment-led strategy for social protection. The MGNREGA aims at enhancing the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing a hundred days of wage employment in a financial year to a rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled work. The act was initially implemented in 2006 in 200 districts and subsequently its coverage was increased to 130 districts in 2007 and to all the remaining districts in 2008. It is the first ever law that guarantees wage employment on an unprecedented scale.

Some of the positive features of the program are its accessibility to rural households, the congenial workplace environment, the building of rural assets, livelihood security to poor rural households and reduction of their poverty levels. Further, it strengthens grassroots level democracy, prevents distress migration, increases the bargaining strength of workers and promotes inclusive growth. Some of the concerns of the program are its sustainability, competence of administrative machinery, improper implementation, leakages, impartiality in social audits, limited days of guaranteed work, low level of wages and stagnation in low-end jobs. Mr. Sahu believed that “MGNREGA beneficiaries can be taken as a reservoir for re-skilling and ultimately transferring these workers to secondary and tertiary sector employment”.

He noted that other measures that could be employed for increasing employability included upgrading the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), establishing new ITIs and Skill Development Centers (SDCs) in unserviced areas and a Skill Development Initiative (SDI) scheme based on a Modular Employable Skills (MES) framework.
Discussion

It was pointed out that the nature and the quality of jobs available to the poor should receive the attention of policy makers and program managers, since it is necessary to provide productive and decent employment of high quality. Another comment included that if a large segment of the new addition to the labor force is migrating abroad for employment, it can be considered as a development failure. It was also pointed out that employment programs in themselves may not be sufficient to respond to different kinds of shocks, as certain needs of the poor go beyond employment-based social protection.

Session 8: Panel Discussion-Child Sensitive Social Protection

Chair: Mr. Andrea Rossi, Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
Presentations: Ms. Bindra Hada, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal; Mr. Carel de Rooy, Representative, UNICEF Bangladesh; Ms. Sherin Khan, Senior Specialist on Child Labour, Decent Work Team, ILO – South Asia
Panelists: Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister of Health and Family, Government of Maldives; Prof. S. Mahendra Dev, Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, India

This session proposed to exchange country experiences related to implementing child sensitive social protection programs. South Asia is home to some of the worst levels of child poverty, evident through high rates of malnutrition, infant mortality, and lack of, or the unequal access of children to sanitation, shelter, health and education. Children require specific attention within social protection – in addition to sharing many of the sources of vulnerability faced by their families and communities, children face age-specific vulnerabilities which differ from those of adults or have more serious consequences such as increased vulnerability to malnutrition, disease and abuse. Child sensitive social protection therefore needs to consider these different dimensions of children's well-being, and address the inherent social disadvantages, risks and vulnerabilities that children may be born into, as well as those acquired later in childhood. Indeed, the Colombo Statement on Children of South Asia (SAARC 2009) highlights the urgent need of social protection policies to address the rights of children to social justice. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) have also jointly declared their support for strengthening cooperation between governments, trade unions, NGOs, and local and international communities of the South Asian region, for mainstreaming child labor concerns in poverty reduction.

Mr. Andrea Rossi, Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, at the outset stated the importance of implementing child sensitive social protection programs. South Asia is home to some of the worst levels of child poverty, evident through high rates of malnutrition, infant mortality and lack of, or unequal access to child sanitation, shelter, health and education. Thus, within social protection, children need special attention. Some indirect interventions that benefit children are employment and educational opportunities for mothers, pensions for the elderly, particularly elderly women. He highlighted that ILO and UNICEF have previously jointly declared their support for strengthening cooperation between governments,
trade unions, NGOs, local and international communities of the South Asian region for mainstreaming child labor concerns in poverty reduction.

**Ms. Bindra Hada**, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal, stated that Nepal is signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention of the Rights of the Child, and the Interim Constitution provides for the right of children to social security. Children are given priority when designing social policy, as two in every five children are malnourished and stunted growth among children is as high as 49 percent (average). In addition, 69 percent of children under 18 years are deprived of at least one basic need. Children are also disproportionately poor from the perspective of consumption poverty, with the child consumption poverty rate being 36 percent as compared to the national average of 31 percent. Therefore, the following child centered social protection initiatives have been introduced: (i) a child grant for children under five years; (ii) children’s homes\(^\text{16}\); (iii) a 24 hour help desk with a toll free phone number; (iv) women and children cells in police units; (v) free basic education; (vi) scholarships for girl and Dalit children; (vii) scholarships for children of ex-bonded laborers; (viii) programs for street children; (ix) strengthening of juvenile justice system.

Realizing the urgency of providing nutritional support for children, the Government of Nepal introduced a *Child Grant* program in 2009-2010. Ms. Hada noted the fact that given that “half of the under five population is underweight, this suggests the next generation of leaders, parents and workers will have weak cognitive and intellectual capacities”. The main objective of the child grant is to protect children from hunger, malnutrition and support their overall development. Each month, Rs. 200 is given per child (under the age of 5), and beneficiaries include all children under 5 in Karnali area and two under 5 children of poor Dalit families all over the country.

Additionally, the Government of Nepal in collaboration with UNICEF is implementing a complementary program, aimed to create awareness about the child grant, to launch a birth registration campaign, provide nutrition related training and awareness, and to develop the institutional capacity of local bodies in implementing the child grant. As a result of the program, there has been a four-fold increase in the birth registration of children under 5 years of age, and 99 percent of targeted children under 5 have received a child grant. Challenges in implementation include the lack of consistent data for under 5 children, more regular monitoring of benefits received, and problems in identifying who constitutes “poor Dalit families”, among others.

It has been acknowledged that the way forward is the continuation and expansion of the *Child Grant* program, focusing on system building, capacity development, monitoring, improving effectiveness and coverage. The *Child Grant* program can be integrated with other social protection programs such as social protection for the elderly, widows and persons with disability. Health facilities and village development committees can coordinate birth information to facilitate birth registration. Monitoring and Information Systems (MIS) should be

\(^{16}\) Homes for orphans, poor, conflict-affected or abandoned children, having arrangements for schooling and periodic visits of medical personnel.
employed to maintain, update and explore options on delivery systems. The systematic documentation of lessons learned and continuous review and improvement of implementation of programs should be undertaken.

Mr. Carel de Rooy, Representative, UNICEF Bangladesh, noted that achieving MDGs with equity in the context of Bangladesh requires a reduction in socio-economic inequalities and breaking of the inter-generational poverty cycle. According to Mr. de Rooy, the best way for the Government of Bangladesh to do this is “by investing in the most vulnerable children through a child sensitive social protection and to embark on more equitable social investments through geographic targeting”. It was noted that the experience of India, China and Brazil shows that economic growth may be necessary but not sufficient to reduce poverty. Empirical data from these three countries have demonstrated that poverty reduction performance seems to be more dependent on inequality reduction than economic growth.

In Bangladesh, almost half of the total poor population is comprised of children, and poverty is closely associated with deprivation of basic services. A recent study on the analysis of social indicators shows that some districts consistently perform well and others perform very badly. Two variables that emerged as the most plausible explanations for bad performance are poverty and geographic isolation. Bangladesh invests about 2.4 percent of its GDP on social protection. There are 84 different modalities implemented by 16 different ministries and agencies. However, only 16 of the 84 modalities directly target children. A populist approach is followed, with small amounts of money for as many people as possible, and targeting is based on income/expenditure poverty. The Primary Education Stipend (PES), providing Taka$^{17}$ 100 or approximately USD 1.5 per child per month, is substantially inferior to the opportunity cost of child labor, which varies between Taka 400-2000 per child per month. Thus there is limited scope for breaking the inter-generational poverty cycle because of limited resource allocation directly for children. UNICEF in Bangladesh has proposed complementary response strategies such as: a) Geographic targeting of least performing areas regarding their progress towards MDGs; b) Investing in vulnerable children to break the inter-generational poverty cycle in 10 years. Evidence suggests that even in a poor country like Bangladesh the government has resources available to virtually break the inter-generational poverty cycle over a decade.

Ms. Sherin Khan, Senior Specialist on Child Labour, Decent Work Team, ILO – South Asia, while providing the background for the presentation, stated that of the 215 million in child labor worldwide, 115 million are in hazardous work. There has been an increase in child labor in hazardous work of those aged 15-17 years, by 20%. Social protection measures traditionally help during household income shocks, collective shocks and at the time of credit constraints. For lower income households, loss of earning of the household head sharply increases the probability of child labor. When personal or natural shocks pile up, children’s work increases. Credit constraints and child labor also go hand in hand. There is a greater tendency to cut the schooling of children in households with credit constraints.

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$^{17}$ Currency of Bangladesh, the Bangladeshi Taka.
Among social protection measures, unconditional transfer schemes have indicated increased school attainments, poverty reduction and higher labor market participation. Conditional transfers have an impact on education. Non-cash transfers, particularly for education have shown a positive impact on children’s education by provision of school support, e.g. books, school supplies, transport, uniforms and mid-day meals. Public works can reduce the need for child income and increase the likelihood of schooling. Social pension schemes, though explicitly designed to protect the elderly poor, also have important impacts on children since they strengthen families’ capacities to invest in children. Some policy options include undertaking conditional and unconditional transfer schemes, both cash and non-cash; public works programs targeting households with child labor or children vulnerable to child labor. School attendance does not necessarily mean reduced child labor. School supplies, transport, meals (etc.) will ensure attendance in school. Another policy option is the introduction of targeted micro-credit schemes.

Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister of Health and Family, Government of Maldives commented that in the Maldives an increasing number of children are born out of wedlock and child abuse and incest are rising. Another problem is the use of drugs among children. Although a rights based approach is followed in the social protection programs, often the mothers and children are unaware of their rights.

Prof. S. Mahendra Dev, Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, India, stated that child protection policies and programs are very much needed in South Asian countries as children are disproportionately affected. In Bangladesh he noted that the quantity and quality of food intake by children is poor and malnutrition is widespread. It was pointed out that the rights-based approach will increase the demand for better services by the State. It is equally important to study successful programs in South Asian countries and replicate these with modifications. At the same time social audits are important to ensure that vulnerable populations benefit from programs that are designed to protect children. Programs to empower women through education and employment will also improve the nutritional status of children to a great extent.

Discussion
During the discussion it was pointed out that social protection programs have been successful when state interventions are complemented by people’s actions through popular movements. Often most centrally sponsored programs have been focused on rural populations and as a result vulnerable urban populations have been neglected. It was highlighted that programs should be financially sustainable and their delivery systems need considerable improvement.
Closing Session: Adoption of the Ministerial Declaration

Chair: Hon. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka
Participants: Hon. Ms. Amena S. Afzali, Minister of Work and Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled, Afghanistan; Hon. Mr. Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shaheed, Minister of Social Welfare, Bangladesh; Mr. Tshewang Tandin, Director General, Ministry of Education, Bhutan; Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India; Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Family, Maldives; Ms. Bindra Hada, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal; Hon. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka

At the conclusion of the Forum, Mr. Felix Perera, Hon. Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka, thanked the ministers and delegates of the South Asian countries for coming to Sri Lanka, participating actively in the deliberations and for formulating a unique declaration with a vision for the future. He thanked UNESCO and other participating donor agencies, in particular UNICEF and ILO for their collaboration. Finally he thanked the Secretary of the Ministry of Social Services, Sri Lanka and the entire staff for ensuring all the administrative arrangements in organizing the Forum. Ms. Marina Faetanini, Programme Specialist, Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO New Delhi, and Regional Coordinator for UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia, thanked the Minister and the Government of Sri Lanka for being very generous hosts and for the excellent facilities provided to conduct the meeting in Sri Lanka. She also thanked the ministers and their delegates from other South Asian countries for their active participation and meaningful dialogue, and for formulating a declaration to take forward social protection research and policy in South Asia. She thanked the other UN and research partners for collaborating in making the meeting a success.

The Colombo Declaration was unanimously adopted by the following ministers and high-level representatives: Hon. Ms. Amena S. Afzali, Minister of Work and Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled, Afghanistan; Hon. Mr. Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shaheed, Minister of Social Welfare, Bangladesh; Mr. Tshewang Tandin, Director General, Ministry of Education, Bhutan; Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India; Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Family, Maldives; Ms. Bindra Hada, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal; Hon. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka.

The adoption of the Ministerial Declaration was followed by a press conference.
COLOMBO DECLARATION

1. Upon the invitation of H.E. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia met on 20, 21 and 22 February 2011 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to attend the Third Ministerial Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia. Ministers and High Level Officials of the following countries attended this meeting, co-organized by UNESCO with the Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

2. In addition, the meeting was attended by the Assistant Director-General, Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO and representatives from UN agencies, NGOs and researchers.

3. Approving the initiative for organizing this Forum, the Ministers present commit to support and adopt the following Declaration:

We, the Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia, meeting in Colombo on 20, 21 and 22 February, 2011:

- Driven by the urgency to counteract the devastating impact of the global financial and economic crisis, including the food crisis, especially on the poor population of our countries;

- Convinced that social protection measures and schemes, taken within a holistic developmental perspective, are an investment in overall social and economic development, contributing to poverty reduction, reduction of inequalities, social inclusion and cohesion as well as economic growth;

- Noting that the countries in the region have the largest concentration of people in poverty and share not only similar historical and cultural linkages, going back thousands of years, but also similar challenges in social development in the present;

- Acknowledging the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with
Disability, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, the UNESCO Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations, the SAARC Social Charter, the SAARC Development Goals, and the UN Social Protection Floor Initiative\(^1\);

- Recalling the findings of the UNESCO World Social Science Report 2010, revealing the marginal presence of South Asia in the domain of international social science research and its limited impact on policy making;

- Recognizing the importance of promoting human dignity, harmony, human rights, inclusion, equality of opportunity and decent work, and having celebrated on 20 February 2011 the World Day of Social Justice;

- Affirming our political will and determination to promote and expand the scope of social protection policies;

**AGREE TO:**

- Pledge to increase public funding to build the capacities of the social sciences in the region, through evidence based research, analysis and statistics\(^2\);

- Ensure that national higher education and research systems, science policies, and national regulatory bodies pay equal attention to the state of social science research and give corresponding support;

- Commit to adopt a comprehensive approach to social protection, encompassing preventive, protective and promotional measures that address both individual and community risks and deprivations, while not disregarding traditional systems of social assistance;

- Recognize the need for expanding the scope and benefits of social protection to the most neglected and vulnerable sections of society such as, informal workers, migrants, persons with disabilities, the urban poor, and other marginalized groups facing discrimination and exclusion;

- Emphasize child-sensitive social protection initiatives as an effective strategy to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and reduce socio-economic disparities;

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\(^1\) The UN Social Protection Floor Initiative, launched in 2009, is a UN system wide effort that through increased interagency collaboration promotes universal access to essential social transfers (cash and kind transfers providing minimum income and livelihood security) and services (water and sanitation, food and adequate nutrition, health, education, housing, life and asset saving information and other social services).

\(^2\) Drawing from recommendations of researchers at the UNESCO-ICSSR Research Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia on 18-19 March, 2010 in New Delhi, India.
• Recognize that youth are partners for development and give due attention to building their capacities through vocational training and development of skills;

• Encourage promotion of employment-led development strategies to ensure people’s livelihoods and facilitate inclusive and redistributive growth;

• Combine efforts to identify existing gaps in design modalities, coverage and implementation quality of social protection programmes;

• Build institutional and governance capacities and preparedness in delivery of social protection programmes, and ensure their regular monitoring and evaluation;

• Prioritize financing for social protection measures in national expenditure plans;

• Strive to move towards a universalized, rights-based, gender sensitive approach in the extension of social protection, providing dignity and voice to the poor and vulnerable and fostering equity, inclusion and citizenship;

• Advance the agenda for a social protection floor, ensuring universal access to essential social transfers and services, adapted to specific country contexts;

• Strengthen regional cooperation among our countries in enriching the field of social protection research and outreach through:

  - Advancing knowledge and research on neglected themes and excluded groups in the field of social protection
  - Pooling and exchanging information on research outcomes
  - Feeding research outcomes to policy makers to improve policy formulation
  - Encouraging think tanks and networks on social protection in the region
  - Conducting training and capacity building for policy makers and Government officials responsible for implementation, for learning and sharing on social protection programmes and on rights-based approaches to programming
  - Exchanging best practices on social protection policies and undertaking cross country studies, exposure visits and joint projects
  - Calling upon UN organizations and international donors to support South Asian countries in their efforts towards expanding public awareness, outreach and scope of social protection initiatives

We commend the Government of Sri Lanka for having hosted the Third Forum of Ministers on Social Protection Policies in South Asia, and for the support of the Government of Sri Lanka, Ministry of Social Services and UNESCO in organizing it.
1. Hon. Mr Felix Perera  
   (Sri Lanka)

2. Hon. Ms Amena S. Afzali  
   (Afghanistan)

3. Hon. Mr. Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shahid  
   (Bangladesh)

4. Mr. Tshewang Tandin  
   (Bhutan)

5. Dr. Narendra Jadhav  
   (India)

6. Ms. Mariya Ali  
   (Maldives)

7. Ms. Bindra Hada  
   (Nepal)

Colombo, 22 February 2011
UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia

Social Protection Policies in South Asia

Third Ministerial Meeting
Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka
20-22 February 2011
Cinnamon Lakeside Hotel
115, Sir Chittampalam A. Gardiner Mawatha
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

Agenda
Sunday 20 February 2011

19:00- 20:30 Inaugural Session: World Day of Social Justice (King’s Court)

Welcome Address: Ms. W.Yamuna Chitranganie, Secretary, Ministry of Social Services, Sri Lanka

Guests of Honour:
Ms. Pilar Álvarez-Laso, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences
Hon. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka

Chief Guest: Hon. D. M. Jayaratne, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

Through this inaugural session, the participants of UNESCO Forum and other invitees will celebrate World Day of Social Justice as per the resolution first passed by more than 100 political leaders in the World Summit of Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, and reiterate their common resolve to achieving justice in social development by the means of complementary social protection measures. It is hoped that the celebration of World Day of Social Justice in Sri Lanka for the first time will contribute to raising the profile of the social science community in Sri Lanka and highlight its relevance for the development of research based social policies in the region.

20:30- 22:30 Welcome Reception and Dinner hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka

Monday 21 February 2011

9:00-9:15 Opening Remarks: Mr Armoogum Parsuramen, Director and UNESCO Representative to India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka (Earl’s Court)

9:15- 10:30 Session 1: Recommendations of UNESCO-ICSSR Research Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia (Earl’s Court)

Chair: Prof. Javeed Alam, Chairperson, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR)

Presentation: Prof. Ravi Srivastava, Professor of Economics & Chairperson, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Panelists: Prof. Achin Chakraborty, Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, India; Mr C. Upendranadh, Asia Governance Coordinator, ActionAid; Prof. Hettige, Professor and Chair of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
The purpose of this session is to provide inputs and suggestions on possible content for the Ministerial Declaration to be adopted at the closing session. Discussions will be based on the *Summary Report of the UNESCO-ICSSR Research Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia*, organized on 18-19 March 2010 in New Delhi, India, and notably on its Recommendations. The meeting brought together over 40 researchers and scholars across South Asia, providing a platform for discussions on country-specific social protection policies and initiatives and identification of best practices. Recommendations included extending benefits of social protection to the most neglected and vulnerable sections of society, promoting employment led development strategies to facilitate inclusive and redistributive growth, identifying gaps in design modalities, coverage and implementation quality of social protection programmes, prioritizing financing of social protection measures and advancing the agenda for a social protection floor in the region. Similarly, the *Summary Report of the UNESCO – NSF National Symposium on Social Protection Policies in Sri Lanka*, held on 30 November – 1 December 2010, will provide inputs and suggestions.

Presentation: 20 minutes
Panelists: 15 minutes each
Discussion

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<th>Time</th>
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<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee Break (Group Photograph)</td>
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<td>11:00-13:00</td>
<td>Session 2: Country Experiences - Learning and Sharing: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India (Earls Court)</td>
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**Speakers:** Hon. Ms Amena S. Afzali, Minister of Work and Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled, Afghanistan; Hon. Mr. Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shahid, Minister of Social Welfare, Bangladesh; Mr. Tshewang Tandin, Director General, Ministry of Education, Bhutan; Dr Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India;

**Moderator:** Mr. Armoogum Parsuramen, Director and UNESCO Representative to India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka

Each country presentation will focus on the most innovative, exemplary or successful national social protection schemes. A comprehensive description and list of social protection schemes in each country is not required here and goes beyond the scope of this session. The session will entail discussing each country’s experience with a few selected schemes, while keeping a particular focus on means of implementation, provisions for transparency and accountability, and results achieved. With references to country experiences, though Afghanistan is confronted with civil strife, the consolidated National Social Protection Strategy, along with other workfare and cash transfer schemes are attempts at institutionalizing social protection. Bangladesh has demonstrated an array of social protection interventions such as the Female Secondary School Assistance Programme, the Vulnerable Group Development Programme, the 100 Day Employment Generation Programme and the gamut of microcredit programmes. In Bhutan, in the absence of formal safety nets, traditional forms of social assistance such as inter household...
transfers in cash and kind and welfare (Kidu), have been predominant. The *Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)* in India has generated immense interest because of its rights based approach to delivering social protection. This paradigm shift has been supported by the passing of the *Unorganised Workers Social Security Act*, emphasizing the need for providing socio-economic security to the large proportion of workers engaged in the unorganised sector. Policies such as the *Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP)* and the *Tribal Sub Plan (TSP)*, focusing on the marginalized strata, have been operational for more than three decades and are being reformulated to make them more effective.

Presentations: 15-20 minutes each
Discussion

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<tr>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>Lunch Break</td>
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<td>14:15</td>
<td>Session 3: Social Protection Schemes for Migrants and the Urban Poor (Earl’s Court)</td>
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**Chair:** Mr. Denys Correll, Executive Director, International Council on Social Welfare

**Panelists:** Dr. Asad Sayeed, Collective for Social Science Research, Pakistan; Dr. Darshini Mahadevia, Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology University (CEPT), India; Dr. Shiva Sharma, Executive-Director, National Labour Academy, Nepal; Mr. Andrea Rossi, Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia; Mr. Richard Danziger, Chief of Mission, IOM, Sri Lanka

This session wishes to highlight the complex case of migrants and urban poor, as a population especially vulnerable and excluded of most social protection schemes in South Asia. In particular, the focus will be on the lack of access to portable social protection benefits for moving populations. The Human Development Report (2009) reveals that Asia displays the highest intra regional migration in the world, with 35.49 million persons moving across Asian countries. Migrants constitute a “floating” population, as they alternate between living at their home and host location, and in turn lose access to social security benefits linked to the residence, and other informal social networks. The urban poor are another neglected group, faced with insecure housing and poor access to social services, health and education opportunities. The session intends to highlight the plight of these excluded groups and identify the new areas of research needed and recommend specific measures.

Chair: Introduction
Panelists: 15 minutes (each)
Discussion

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<td>Tea/Coffee Break</td>
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16:30 – 17:30  Session 4: Ministerial Roundtable on the Ministerial Declaration
(Closed Session – Queen’s Court)

Chair: Ms. Pilar Álvarez-Laso, UNESCO Assistant Director-General of Social and Human Sciences
Participants: Hon. Ms Amena S. Afzali, Minister of Work and Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled, Afghanistan; Hon. Mr. Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shahid, Minister of Social Welfare, Bangladesh; Mr. Tshewang Tandin, Director General, Ministry of Education, Bhutan; Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India; Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Family, Maldives; Ms. Bindra Hada, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal; Hon. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka

The purpose of this ministerial roundtable is for the Ministers and their delegation to discuss and approve a draft Ministerial Declaration to be adopted at the end of the Forum. The objective of the Declaration is to highlight the issues of inequalities in social justice and the means of mitigating them through social protection policies. This draft aims to outline concrete measures, which reflect the recommendations proposed by researchers and the key national and regional priorities identified by the participating Ministers.

19:30 – 21:30 Dinner hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka

Tuesday 22 February 2011

9:00- 11:00  Session 5: Panel Discussion- A Social Protection Floor for South Asia?
(Earl’s Court)

Chair: Mr. Markus Ruck, Senior Specialist on Social Security, Decent Work Team, International Labor Organization (ILO – South Asia)
Panelists: Dr. Firdosi Rustom Mehta, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative to Sri Lanka; Mr. A. S. Shenoy, National President, International Council of Social Welfare, India; Prof. Ravi Srivastava, Professor of Economics & Chairperson, Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University

The session will be devoted to discussing the principles supporting the Social Protection Floor Initiative and its practical eligibility in the South Asian region. The UN Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPFI) promotes universal access to an essential set of services (such as education, water and sanitation, food and adequate nutrition, health and housing) and transfers (in cash and in kind) to provide a minimum income and livelihood security for the poor and vulnerable
populations, in line with human rights treaties. This session proposes the exchange of ideas and experiences of the participating countries in building, expanding and re-orienting existing schemes towards the realization of a social protection floor for South Asia. It will entail raising awareness, identifying viable policy options, elaborating country specific measures to facilitate ownership of the initiative by national governments, social partners and NGOs.

Presentation of the Chair: 20 minutes
Panelists: 15 minutes each
Discussion

11:00- 11:30  Tea/Coffee Break

11:30- 13.00  Session 6: Country Experiences: Learning and Sharing: Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka (Earl’s Court)

Speakers: Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Family, Maldives; Ms. Bindra Hada, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal; Hon. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka
Moderator: Ms. Elizabeth Longworth, UNESCO Deputy Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences and Director of Social Research Policy

Each country presentation will focus on the most innovative, exemplary or successful national social protection schemes. A comprehensive description and list of social protection schemes in each country is not required here and goes beyond the scope of this session. The session will entail discussing each country’s experience with a few selected schemes, while keeping a particular focus on means of implementation, provisions for transparency and accountability, and results achieved. With reference to country experiences, in the Maldives, the Absolute Poverty Scheme, universal old age pension scheme and vouchers for textbooks and uniforms for children have been noteworthy initiatives. In Nepal, a universal old age pension, grants for building social and physical infrastructure, Maternity incentive scheme, and the Education for All programme are among the social protection interventions. The Samurdhi programme in Sri Lanka is unique since it encompasses different components of social protection in its strategy such as a savings and credit programme, income transfer and development of community infrastructure through trainings, workfare and social development programs.

Presentations: 15-20 minutes each
Discussion

13.00- 14:15 Lunch Break
Session 7: Panel Discussion- Employment-led Strategies for Social Protection in South Asia (Earl’s Court)

Chair: Prof. Rizwanul Islam, Former Special Advisor, Employment Sector, ILO Geneva
Panelists: Dr Naushin Mahmood, Professor, Institute of Development Economics, Pakistan; Dr. Bishwa Nath Tiwari, Tribhuvan University, Nepal; Dr. Nisha Arunatilake, Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka; Mr. Ashok Sahu, Senior Advisor, Labour & Employment, Planning Commission, Government of India

The predominance of the informal segment of the economy characterized by growing unemployment in the South Asian region provides the impetus for devising social protection policies that are aimed at creating employment. Hence, the importance of social protection policies aimed at achieving higher economic and social development in the region through an increase in employment opportunities. Employment centred public works programmes have been traditionally preferred as they focus simultaneously on investment in infrastructure and creation of employment opportunities. This session proposes to analyze examples of employment-led schemes in South Asia such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, India (2006), the launch of the 100 day employment generation programme in Bangladesh (2008), and the Employment Guarantee Programme in Nepal, amongst others. The session will provide a platform for the participating countries to share their experiences in implementation, administrative modalities, modes of financing and difficulties faced in order to strengthen regional cooperation for such schemes.

Presentation of the Chair: 20 minutes
Panelists: 15 minutes each
Discussion

Tea Break

Session 8: Panel Discussion- Child Sensitive Social Protection (Earl’s Court)

Chair: Mr. Andrea Rossi, Regional Social Policy Advisor, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
Presentations: Ms. Bindra Hada, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal; Mr. Carel de Rooy, Representative, UNICEF Bangladesh; Ms. Sherin Khan, Senior Specialist on Child Labour, Decent Work Team, ILO – South Asia
Panelists: Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister of Health and Family, Government of Maldives; Prof. S. Mahendra Dev, Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, India

This session proposes the dissemination and exchange of country experiences related to implementing child sensitive social protection programmes. South Asia is home to some of the
worst levels of child poverty, evident through high rates of malnutrition, infant mortality, and lack of or unequal access of children to sanitation, shelter, health and education. Children require specific attention within social protection – in addition to sharing many of the sources of vulnerability faced by their families and communities, children face age-specific vulnerabilities which differ from those of adults or have more serious consequences such as increased vulnerability to malnutrition, disease and abuse. Child sensitive social protection therefore needs to consider these different dimensions of children’s well-being, and address the inherent social disadvantages, risks and vulnerabilities children may be born into, as well as those acquired later in childhood. Indeed, the Colombo Statement on Children of South Asia (SAARC 2009) highlighted the urgent need of social protection policies to address the rights of children to social justice. The International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) have also jointly declared their support for strengthening cooperation between governments, trade unions, NGOs, local and international communities of the South Asian region for mainstreaming child labor concerns in poverty reduction.

Presentation of the Chair: 10 minutes
Presentations: 15 minutes each
Panelists discussion: 20 minutes
Discussion

18:00- 19:00 Closing Session: Adoption of the Ministerial Declaration (Queen`s Court)

Chair: Hon. Mr Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka
Participants: Hon. Ms Amena S. Afzali, Minister of Work and Social Affairs, Martyrs & Disabled, Afghanistan; Hon. Mr. Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shahid, Minister of Social Welfare, Bangladesh; Mr. Tshewang Tandin, Director General, Ministry of Education, Bhutan; Dr. Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India; Ms. Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Family, Maldives; Ms. Bindra Hada, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Nepal; Hon. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka

Following the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration, there shall be a Press Conference open to all participants (tentative starting time: 18:30).
UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia

Social Protection Policies in South Asia
Third Ministerial Meeting
Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA
20-22 February 2011

Concept Note
February 2011
INTRODUCTION

The Third Meeting of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia is jointly organized by UNESCO and the Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka, on Social Protection Policies in South Asia. Such fora were launched by UNESCO in 2001, in Latin America, in the framework of UNESCO’s Management of Social Transformation Programme (MOST), with the aim of enhancing dialogue between Ministries, academic researchers and members of the civil society, to enable the development of high quality policy responses to issues of social transformations. The following note elaborates on the background, context and objectives of the Third Meeting of UNESCO Forum of Ministers to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 20 to 22 February 2011.

BACKGROUND

M.O.S.T.: UNESCO Management of Social Transformations programme

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized UN agency with a multiple mandate and a constituency of 193 Member States. It was founded in 1945 to build peace and mutual understanding between member countries by promoting international cooperation through education, sciences, culture and communication.

In 1994, UNESCO launched the Management of Social Transformations’ (MOST) programme, with the objective to play a significant role in disseminating knowledge to member States on managing social challenges and transformations. A key objective is to assist member States with improving the quality of policy-making by encouraging evidence-based policy making and research and analysis through dialogue with key stakeholders. Therefore, MOST plays a unique role in bringing researchers and policy-makers together to apply research to policy and thereby improving policy formulation, anchored by international norms and standards. Further, as part of the broader UN system, MOST is called upon to contribute to the realization of human rights and to the enhancement of social development. In 2003, in recognition of the increasing need to further improve policy formulation and relevance, MOST has been reoriented\(^1\), both thematically and in terms of its modalities of operation, with a stronger focus attached to building efficient bridges between research, policy and practice, and on promoting a culture of policy-making based on analysis of evidence and on dialogue.

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\(^1\) MOST has been reoriented in response to the recommendations that were made in February 2003 during the 6th session of the Intergovernmental Council of the MOST Programme, which comprises 35 Member States, and later approved by the 166th session of UNESCO’s Executive Board (166 EX/41).
UNESCO Fora of Ministers of Social Development

One of the ways MOST assists Member States in responding to global challenges is through the institutionalization of regional and sub-regional Fora of Ministers in charge of Social Development. These fora serve as platforms to enable the concerned Ministeries to meet and exchange their experiences, engage in dialogue with researchers and other important stakeholders, particularly the civil society and the UN System. The result of this process is to enable the development of high quality policy responses to challenges and opportunities posed by social transformations worldwide.  

The Fora of Ministers aim to provide a space for regional dialogue at a Ministerial level for regional strategies on social policy; a platform for the exchange of experiences and best practices on national policies; an environment that encourages the scope and development of joint projects and opportunities to influence international reflection and policy-making.

Mitigating the social consequences of the economic and financial crisis

Member States have identified an immediate need to mitigate the serious social impact of the financial and economic crisis. The UN Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-Moon, and the Chief Executives of the United Nations system, stressed at a meeting in UNESCO (4th and 5th April 2009) that “If action is not taken urgently, it can be devastating for the most vulnerable, with growing social insecurity and displacement of people. The achievement of the MDGs is at stake. The middle class in many countries is being weakened. The vulnerable groups, children, women, youth, elderly, migrants and people with disabilities are hit the strongest”. The Chief Executives Board (CEB) underlined that the capacity of governments to design, afford and implement the right policies, while coordinating them with international partners, must be strengthened: “The multilateral system plays a central role in articulating and delivering a global and coherent response to the crisis, and in translating it into action at the country level”.

The CEB agreed on the need for policy coherence and coordination on nine joint crisis initiatives (Box 1), each of which has one or more multilateral lead agencies. As a result, and in response to the crisis, The MOST programme at present is focusing on the social implications of the financial and economic crisis and appropriate policy responses, through all regional and sub-regional Fora of Ministers in charge of Social Development, encompassing regions from Latin America to Africa and South Asia.

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2 Such Fora of Ministers have been organized in Latin America (seven times); South Asia (twice); for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (twice), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (twice); the East African Community (twice), the Arab region (twice) and the Caribbean (once). The years 2010 - 2011 will be marked by the launch of a Forum of Ministers for South East Asia and Central Asia respectively, and for the Caribbean.

3 The thematic session of the ninth session of the Intergovernmental Council (IGC) of the MOST Programme (28-30 September 2009) was "National and International Responses to the Crisis".
Box 1 - THE NINE JOINT CRISIS INITIATIVES OF THE U.N. CHIEF EXECUTIVES BOARD (CEB)

1. Additional financing for the most vulnerable: advocating and devising joint World Bank-UN system mechanisms for the common articulation and implementation of additional financing, including through the World Bank proposed Vulnerability Fund.

2. Food Security: strengthening programmes to feed the hungry and expanding support to farmers in developing countries.

3. Trade: fighting protectionism, including through the conclusion of the Doha round and strengthening aid for trade initiatives and finance for trade.


5. A Global Jobs Pact: boosting employment, production, investment and aggregate demand, and promoting a decent world for all.

6. A Social Protection Floor: ensuring access to basic social services, shelter, empowerment and protection of the poor and vulnerable.

7. Humanitarian, Security and Social Stability: emergency action to protect lives and livelihoods, meeting hunger and humanitarian needs, protecting displaced people and shoring up security and social stability.

8. Technology and Innovation: developing technological infrastructure to facilitate the promotion and access to innovation.

9. Monitoring and Analysis: (i) Strengthening macroeconomic and financial surveillance and implementing an effective economic early warning system; (ii) urgently establish a UN system-wide vulnerability monitoring and alert mechanism to track developments, and report on the political, economic, social and environmental dimensions of the crisis.

The UN Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPFI)

Out of the nine CEB initiatives, it is the Social Protection Floor and the Global Jobs Pact which have received the highest political attention and support by United Nations’ Member States and the UN-system.

The objective of the Social Protection Floor is to promote and support the implementation of a basic set of social transfers, in cash and in kind, paid to the poor and vulnerable to provide minimum income security and access to essential health care, and the availability and access to essential services, such as education and health, adequate nutrition, water and sanitation. It is intended to provide, amongst others, a framework through which countries can expand social protection by scaling up existing programs or replicating successful practices from other countries with room for regional idiosyncrasies.

UNESCO fully supports the Social Protection Floor Initiative led by ILO and WHO, and participates with them in its development. At the inter-agency meeting on the Social Protection Floor (Turin, Italy, October 2009), it was suggested that UNESCO Fora of Ministers in charge of Social Development could publicly advocate for this initiative and exchange best
practices regarding social protection. In response to this, Ministers planning to host upcoming Fora have already agreed to this thematic focus. Following the convening of each sub-regional Forum of Ministers of Social Development, MOST will analyze and summarize the results in a policy brief format. At the end of 2011, MOST will publish a Policy Brief on social protection practices and experiences drawn from several regions, including South Asia.

Box 2 - THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The 48th Session of the Commission for Social Development, 2-13 February 2010, United Nations Headquarters, adopted a resolution on “Promoting social integration” which makes several references to the Social Protection Floor and social protection policies to achieve this: “Further recognizing that social protection is also an investment in people and in long-term social and economic development, in this regard appropriate social protection systems make a critical contribution to meeting the development goals directed towards poverty eradication and exerting a positive impact on economic growth, social cohesion and social development”. In the Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/2010/2) prepared for the Commission under this agenda it is recommended that: “Governments should establish basic social protection schemes for both the formal and informal sectors so as to promote equity, inclusion, cohesion and stability in society. Social protection programmes should be designed to protect people throughout their life course, as well as to support the poor and most vulnerable, especially during periods of macroeconomic instability. All countries are encouraged to put in place a social protection floor”4.

Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia

The South Asian Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development was launched in 2006 in Bhurban, Pakistan, with a Ministerial Meeting on Governance and Public Accountability, and concluded with the Ministers’ agreement to institutionalize the Forum. Two years later, in 2008, a Second Ministerial Meeting was organized in New Delhi, India, on Transparency, Right to Information and Social Development. In the New Delhi Declaration, the Ministers stressed the importance of research for evidence-based policy-making: “…reiterate our common resolve to strengthen the Forum of Ministers of Social Development in South Asia, with the aim of facilitating consultations and dialogue that will help to develop social policies on the basis of scientific evidence”.

In order to provide the opportunity for social policy dialogue among South Asian countries in the field of social protection policies, the Third Meeting of the Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development is jointly organized in Sri Lanka (Colombo) by the Ministry of Social Services (MSS) and UNESCO, from 20 to 22 February 2011. The inaugural session will coincide with the celebration of the World Day of Social Justice, established in 2009, and held on 20 February.

Social Protection in South Asia
Social Protection pertains to the set of public measures that a society provides for its members to protect them against economic and social distress caused by the absence or a substantial reduction of income from work as a result of various contingencies (sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age or death of the breadwinner), the provision of health care and the provision of benefits for families with children. The International Labor Organization (ILO) suggests that social protection should be approached in its various dimensions and through various phases. The dimensions include: access to essential goods and services, prevention of and protection against various risks, and promotion of potentials and opportunities in order to break vicious cycles and pervasive tendencies. The phases are: before, during, and after working years.

At the international level, the presence of working class struggles and the consequent evolution of state policy in a number of diverse systems led to the post war consensus on social security and social protection as human rights. This is clearly set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Articles 22 to 26 state the universal right of each individual to a basic standard of life, to proper working conditions and to social security and social protection. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, again recognizes “the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance” (Article 9) and Articles 10 to 13 of the Convention elaborate on the right of mothers and infants, the right to a decent standard of living, the right to food, health and education. While the developed countries have a legacy of social protection that emanated from welfare state regimes, the same is not the case with developing countries. The reason for such a situation is that most developing countries are still grappling to meet the needs of vast majority of population in terms of their basic human capabilities. Moreover, the economic structure of these countries, which are dominated by the informal sector, militates against the expansion and the universalization of social protection policies. For instance, over 90% of the labour force in the countries of South Asia are informal workers and over 75% of the population of the six largest countries of the South Asia live under $2 (PPP) a day.

In policy terms, the governments of developing countries have a vital role in creating mechanisms to provide basic social security (capability enhancing measures) as well as mechanisms in mitigating the vulnerabilities that poor and marginalized sections face due to various reasons including their inability to mediate the dynamics of the labour market. It would also mean acknowledging the critical role of poverty reduction strategies that need to work in
tandem with social protection policies. With increasing acknowledgement of the multi-dimensional nature of poverty and the far-reaching potential of social protection, it is advocated that there is a need to view social protection policies as ‘developmental’ as against their current treatment as ‘residual’ social policies. Such mainstreaming is also in conformity with the thinking that social protection policies ought to be ‘transformative’ in content and practice as they mediate through notions of rights and entitlements, inclusion, citizenship, collectivity of the poor and good governance. One does find a plethora of targeted programmes and schemes in all the countries of the South Asian region but most of them suffer from limitations in terms of design, outreach, quality and impact.

While conceptual developments of social protection are available in the existing policy literature, there is a need to translate them into programmes and identify barriers for extension of social protection to the poor and marginalized. What appears to be dramatically missing in the region is a cohesive and inclusive national social protection policy that would articulate aspirations and programmes for social development. There is also a need to identify and adapt innovative forms of social protection that are available across the countries of South Asia, which share several similarities in terms of nature and quantum of poverty, social exclusion, conditions of vulnerability and deprivation amongst their populations.

**World Day of Social Justice**  
On November 26, 2007, the UN General Assembly named February 20 as the World Day of Social Justice. The World Day of Social Justice is the result of a resolution taken by more than 100 political leaders at the World Summit of Social Development held in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1995, to conquer poverty and ensure full employment, as well as stable, safe and just societies. It was in an effort to put people at the centre of development plans and an attempt to spread the fervor of social justice both within and between countries. The inaugural session of the Forum organized on Sunday 20 February 2011 will be open to a larger number of participants, notably to social scientists and researchers from Sri Lanka, officials from other Ministries, and to the United Nations family in Sri Lanka. It is hoped that the celebration of World Day of Social Justice in Colombo, for the first time, will raise the general profile of the social science community in Sri Lanka and of the United Nations Social Protection Floor Initiative.

**Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka**  
The Ministry of Social Services is long time partner of the MOST programme, and has been a regular member of the MOST Intergovernmental Council. It serves as an appropriate platform for the nature and theme of the dialogue proposed by the Forum. The Ministry works with an aim to make the disadvantaged equal partners in national development by providing the right environment and opportunities, through policy initiatives in the fields of social welfare and social development. Programmes range from rehabilitation, social integration and protection of persons with disabilities, to provision of pension and social security for the self-employed and promotion of living standards of women and children under difficult circumstances. Current schemes provide housing grants,  

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5 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are invoked to situate the discourse on entitlements and rights over social protection.
medical assistance, opportunities for self-employment, days of employment, counseling programmes and community based rehabilitation programmes for the disabled and aged. As it is the case in most countries, several Ministries are involved in the field of social protection in Sri Lanka, such as, among others, the Ministry of Labour and Labour Relations, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Child Development & Women’s Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance and Planning, and the Ministry of Education. The main poverty alleviation programme of Sri Lanka, *Samurdhi*, focuses on income transfers and improving the nutritional status of mothers.

**Social Protection Policies in South Asia: Preparatory Research Meeting**

A joint *UNESCO – ICSSR Research Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia* was organized in New Delhi, on 18th and 19th March 2010, with the participation of over forty scholars and experts from across South Asia. Twelve research papers and presentations, having a focus on implementation, innovations and extensions of social protection in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and South Asia as a whole, were debated and discussed. The material collected for the Research Meeting, including a *Summary Report* of the debate and the *Recommendations from Researchers*, has been compiled in a working document, which is expected to provide inputs to the Ministerial Meeting, by highlighting: key areas for regional cooperation; national best practices or social protection gaps; and key policy recommendations to Ministers. It is available online, along with the full research papers, concept note, agenda, list of participants, at: [www.unesco.org/newdelhi](http://www.unesco.org/newdelhi) (click: social and human sciences/ social policy dialogues/ News) and on CD-Rom.

**Key objectives**

It is hoped that the current Forum will contribute towards:

- The advancement of the agenda for a social protection floor in South Asia, ensuring universal access to essential social transfers (cash and kind transfers providing minimum income and livelihood security) and services (water and sanitation, food and adequate nutrition, health, education, housing)
- The advancement of knowledge and social research on neglected themes and excluded groups in the field of social protection, such the migrants and the urban poor;
- The development of opportunities to sustain horizontal cooperation in South Asia at the levels of academic research, and public policy;

**Outcomes**

The expected outcomes of this event are to increase awareness, engagement and advocacy on the importance of social protection policies in the South Asian region, based on sound research. It is anticipated that the participants of the Forum will gain:

- A better knowledge of existing social protection policies in South Asia
- An overview of sound practices in social protection policies of the countries of the South Asian region and their possible replicability

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6 The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) was established in 1969 by the Government of India to promote social sciences research in the country and serve as an advisor to the Government in matters of social science research, its promotion and eventual utilization.
✓ A higher level of awareness about the Social Protection Floor Initiative and its practical eligibility in South Asia
✓ A greater level of networking and exchange between social scientists and policy makers
✓ A better understanding of the fact that the development of social science research and capacity is a critical part of the policy making process

Expected Outputs
✓ The adoption of a Ministerial Declaration on social protection policies, in conjunction with the SAARC Social Charter and other relevant documents, that will reflect a common consensus on the need for governments to ensure universal access to basic services (health, education, housing, nutrition, ..) in South Asian countries
✓ The Summary Report of the UNESCO-ICSSR Research Meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia held on 18-19 March 2010 in New Delhi, India will serve as a background paper for the Forum. The report highlights the themes and topics discussed and provides pertinent information related to the state of social protection policies in South Asia and the experiences of countries in implementing them
✓ Key recommendations emanating from the Forum, as well as the Ministerial Declaration, will be highlighted and disseminated to the social science community, the civil society and the policy makers in South Asia (online, mailing lists, media, etc.)

Presentations and papers
It is proposed that at least one country presentation (15-20 minutes) be invited from each country. The country presentation should focus on the very social protection schemes that are truly representative of the country’s achievements, difficulties or aspirations, are currently debated within the country, or have the most innovative approach. A comprehensive description and list of social protection schemes in each country is not required and goes beyond the scope of the country sessions, which is to stimulate dialogue among different countries. The country sessions will entail discussing each country’s experience, while keeping a particular focus on means of implementation, provisions for transparency and accountability, and results achieved. In all, it is expected that eight country presentations would be presented by the Ministers or the Head of Delegation, before the sessions are opened up for general discussion. Country presentations should stimulate the discussions and the exchange of knowledge and experiences (best practices), so that policy alternatives can be discussed in more concrete terms, with specific proposals for regional cooperation. The research material made available stresses a number of sub-themes that could be used as guidelines in preparing papers and presentations such as the need for social protection policies to encompass the interests of the urban poor and migrants, the viability of employment-led social protection policies in the South Asian region and the eligibility of a Social Protection Floor for South Asia. The UNICEF ROSA publication on “Social Protection in South Asia: A Review” is also been made available as a resourceful documentation. On social science at large, UNESCO World Social Science Report (WSSR 2010) will be available in its summary version as an important testimony on the state of social science in the world.
There are three sessions devoted to country presentations and four thematic sessions, which, as per the recommendations of the researchers, will focus on: employment oriented social protection schemes, social protection floor initiative, social protection measures inclusive of children needs, and the nature and extent of the population excluded from social protection measures (urban poor, migrants). One session will be devoted to the joint preparation of a Ministerial Declaration.

Participants
In addition to the eight Ministers in charge of Social Development from the SAARC region and their delegation, and representatives from SAARC, about twenty scholars will be invited from universities, research organizations, and think-tanks across South Asia, including several researchers who attended the UNESCO – ICSSR Research Meeting held in March 2010. Experts from international agencies (multilateral and bilateral), UN organizations, especially key partners of the Forum such as UNICEF and ILO, and development practitioners from the grassroots are invited to participate to share their experiences as panelists, speakers or participants. In total, 60 participants are expected to attend.

Accommodation and Travel
Boarding and lodging of Ministers will be provided by the Government of Sri Lanka for the duration of the Ministerial Meeting. The researchers invited will be provided with a comprehensive travel grant from our partners, the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC – South Asia), the International Council for Social Welfare (ICSW – South Asia), and the Institute for Human Development, India (IHD). If traveling by Sri Lankan Airlines, all participants will be granted air fares at discounted rates.

Partners
This initiative has drawn support from a variety of partners who have provided a meaningful contribution at different levels: Sri Lankan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, National Science Foundation (NSF), Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (JNU), Institute for Human Development, New Delhi (IHD), Social Protection in Asia network (SPA), International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Children`s Fund (UNICEF), International Development and Research Centre (IDRC–South Asia), International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW) and Sri Lankan Airlines.

Focal Points
For Sri Lanka, the Focal Point is Ms. W. Yamuna Chitranganie, Secretary, Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka (email: msssec@sltnet.lk; Phone: +94 11 2877124/ 2883525 Fax: +94 11 2877381). For UNESCO, the Sub-regional Coordinator of the Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia is Ms Marina Faetanini, Programme Specialist, Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO New Delhi Office (email: m.faetanini@unesco.org; Phone: +91 11 267 13000 ext 316; Fax: +91 11 267 13 001-2), assisted by Mr. Shehan Ratnavale, UNESCO Focal Point in Sri Lanka (email: s.ratnavale@unesco.org; Phone: +94 11 2745178) 
Conference Secretariat: Ms. Olinka Randeniya, Coordinating Secretary, at: msssec@sltnet.lk.
UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia

Social Protection Policies in South Asia

Third Ministerial Meeting
Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka
20-22 February 2011
Cinnamon Lakeside Hotel
115, Sir Chittampalam A. Gardiner Mawatha
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

Biographies
In alphabetical order:

Sarth A.K. Abayawardana, Director, National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka

Sohail Abbasi, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Pakistan
Mr. Abbasi has over eight years of experience of working in public, private, not for profit and development sector. His core area of work had been social protection initiatives, especially social protection in emergencies and social safety nets. In addition, he had worked on large scale post disaster infrastructure rehabilitation projects, such as, design and construction of hospitals, schools/colleges/universities, roads and social welfare complexes. Mr. Abbasi’s interest had been in development of protection systems (social protection and welfare) including social protection strategy formulation, capacity building, program design and monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, as Child Protection Specialist, he has been part of design and implementation of initiatives, such as, promotion of restorative justice for juveniles and conditional cash transfers for out of school children. Mr. Abbasi holds a Master of Business Administration (Pakistan) and a Master of Public Administritation (California).

Amena Safi Afzali, Minister, Ministry of Work, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, Government of Afghanistan
Ms. Afzali is the Minister of Work, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled of Afghanistan. She is the founder of the Islamic Movement of Afghani Women, an organization promoting women’s rights, particularly in education and political activism. She was appointed Commissioner for the Human Rights Commission in 2002 and in 2004 she became the Minister of Youth Affairs. She actively participated in drafting the Afghani constitution, ensuring the protection of women’s rights. She achieved to have women sitting at the country’s National Assembly. Ms. Afzali holds a degree from the Kabul University.

Javeed Alam, Chairman, Indian Council of Social Science Research
Prof. Alam has been the Chairman of Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) since 2008. He is also the Chairman of the Expert Group on Minorities of the State of Kerala. Prof Alam is a retired professor of the Centre for European Studies of the English and Foreign Language University, Hyderabad. He was the Head of the Department of Political Science of Himachal Pradesh University for over 26 years. His research activity is dedicated to democracy, nationalism, secularism and Marxism and its Indian interpretations. He holds an MA from Osmania University and a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University.
Mariya Ali, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Family, Republic of Maldives

Before joining the Ministry of Health and Family as Deputy Minister, Ms. Ali worked as a social worker in London from 2001 to 2002. She was a consultant for UNICEF in Male’ from 2006 to 2007. Ms. Ali holds a Master’s Degree in International Child Welfare for the University of East Anglia, Norwich and a PhD in Human Rights from the Institute of Commonwealth Studies of the University of London.

Pilar Álvarez-Laso, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO

Ms. Álvarez-Laso’s career between 1980 and 1985 includes both social sciences and media responsibilities, as well as research in the social sciences. From 1985 to 1990, she was Editorial Coordinator, Anchor and Reporter at the Instituto Mexicano de Televisión. From 1986 to 1987, she was also a Professor at the Universidad Intercontinental, Mexico. From 1994 to 1997, Ms Álvarez-Laso was Television Programming Director at the Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicacion Educativa (ILCE). She was also Director of Information for the Electoral Federal Institute (IFE) in the first independent, citizen-organized elections in Mexico. Between 1998 and 2007, Ms. Álvarez-Laso was the Special Programmes Director and Communications Editor for ILCE, as well as News Editor in commercial Mexican television and radio networks. Her most recent position was that of Coordinator for Radio and Television at ILCE, broadcasting for the Mexican Ministry of Education and other public institutions. She was also Honorary Senior Adviser for the Science Consulting Council at the Presidency of the Republic of Mexico.

Over the course of her career, Ms Álvarez-Laso has launched the first educational television satellite channel in Mexico, promoted initiatives for people with special needs and immigrants, and promoted educational programmes on democracy. Ms Álvarez-Laso holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Communications from the Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico and a Master’s Degree in Foreign Affairs from the Universidad Nacional Autonoma, Mexico. She also obtained a Diploma in Advanced Studies (D.E.A.) in Contemporary International Migrations from the Universidad Comillas, Madrid and registered her PhD project in the Analysis and Evaluation in Political and Social Processes Programme at the Universidad Carlos III, Madrid. She is a published author on immigration, politics, democracy, media and communication.

Champika Amerasinghe, Director General, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Sri Lanka

Nisha Arunatilake, Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka

Dr. Arunatilake has over 15 years research experience in conducting research in various dimensions of development, especially in areas of education, health, labour, employment and social protection. She has been the principal investigator on over 10 studies. She has
collaborated with various development partners and has several peer-reviewed journal articles to her credit. She has served in national level committees on labour, employment, human resource development, and health sector reform, human rights and tobacco and alcohol policy formulation. At present she is serving in the National Advisory Committee on Manpower Planning, of the Ministry of Labour Relations and Manpower Planning. She has a Ph.D. in economics from Duke University.

Krishna Hari Baskota, Secretary (Revenue), Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal

Neil Buhne, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sri Lanka, and Resident Representative of UNDP in Sri Lanka

A national of Canada, Mr. Buhne started his career with the United Nations as a Junior Professional Officer with UNDP in Colombo in 1984. Subsequently he has served in Sudan, Bhutan, Pakistan and Malaysia – where he served as acting UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative during 2007 and 2008. His most recent assignment was in Bulgaria where he led the largest programme for UNDP in Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States Region with more 70 partnership projects at a value of US $150 million. During his term, the UN Team, played an important role in supporting Bulgaria to obtain membership in the European Union. During those years, the UN agencies spearheaded human development initiatives in Bulgaria in a diverse range of areas, including employment generation, local government, good governance, environmental protection and information technology. From 1999 to 2003, Mr. Buhne led the UN team in Belarus. He facilitated the development of a new joint approach to deal with the continuing human consequences of the 1986 Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster, by working together with the UN country teams in Russia and Ukraine, the Office of UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs, and the respective governments. He helped develop a range of new projects to preserve and sustainably develop Belarus’ environment, and was the leader of efforts to support Belarus to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS. Mr. Buhne holds a Master’s Degree in International Affairs from Carleton University, Ottawa.

Achin Chakraborty, Professor of Economics, Institute of Development Studies – Kolkata

Prof. Chakraborti is Professor of Economics at the Institute of Development Studies – Kolkata (IDSK). He is engaged in teaching and research in the areas of welfare economics including poverty and inequality measurement, and human development. Before joining IDSK he had been an Associate Professor at the Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Thiruvananthapuram, between 1996 and 2004. Prof. Chakraborty received his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of California at Riverside. He was awarded the dissertation fellowship for 1994-95 by the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, USA. He carried out a number of research projects both at CDS and at IDSK, which include Economic Analysis of Coastal and Marine Resources Management and Poverty
Reduction (IUCN and ADB), Poverty Impact Assessment of SAL to Kerala (ADB), An Evaluation Study on Advocacy of Safe Motherhood under Community Health Care Monitoring Initiative (Government of West Bengal, UNICEF), Allocation and Utilization of Resources for Social Sector Programmes in Purulia District (UNICEF).

**W. Yamuna Chitranganie, Secretary, Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka**

Ms. Chitranganie is presently the Secretary of the Ministry of Social Services of Sri Lanka. She is a Special Grade Officer of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service. Ms. Chitranganie joined the Administrative Service in 1980. She worked at the Department of Social Services as an Assistant Director and was promoted to Director. She then became Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Social Services. She was the first Director of the National Secretariat for Elders. Ms. Chitranganie is the Chairperson of the National Institute of Social Development and the Chairperson of the National Council for Elders.

**S.S. Colombage, Department of Social Studies, Open University of Sri Lanka**

**Denys Correll, Executive Director, International Council on Social Welfare**

Mr. Correll has been Executive Director of the International Council on Social Welfare since August 2002, which was first based in London and now in Utrecht, The Netherlands. Previously he has held association management positions including National Executive Director of Council on the Ageing, Australia’s influential organisation of older people and National Executive Director of Australia’s peak organisation for providers of disability services. Earlier in his career, Denys worked for five years in the public service, noted the experience and returned to association management. He is a Fellow of the Australian Society of Association Executives. He has been a board member and chair of a very successful insurance company specialising in insurance for older Australians. He has held voluntary positions on the boards of The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Australia, Australian Society of Association Executives, European Society of Association Executives, Rehabilitation International and the International Federation on Ageing.

**Richard Danziger, Chief Mission, IOM Sri Lanka**

Richard Danziger was appointed as Chief of Mission, IOM Sri Lanka in 2010. Prior to this he was Head of the International Organization for Migration’s (IOM) Counter Trafficking Division based in Geneva since 2004. His work entailed developing IOM’s overall policy on combating trafficking in persons, and advising the Organization’s Member States on their own anti-trafficking strategies. He was also responsible for administering IOM’s global database on victims of trafficking, and the Global Assistance Fund which provides for protection and assistance to victims around the world. Mr. Danziger has also held the positions of IOM’s Regional Representative for West and Central Asia, Chief of
Mission in Afghanistan, Indonesia and Pakistan, and was assigned as a Senior Technical Advisor to the Palestinian Authority in 2000. Mr. Danziger was IOM’s original focal point for the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. He was a founding member of the Steering Committee of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UNGFIT) and is currently Chair of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Illicit Trade.

Kirby S. de Lanerolle, Advisor to Minster, Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka

Carel de Rooy, Representative, UNICEF Bangladesh
Mr. de Rooy of Dutch nationality has been Representative to UNICEF Bangladesh since July 2008. He joined UNICEF in 1984 as Chief Water Supply Officer in Nigeria. He was Regional Planning Officer in the West and Central Africa Regional Office from 1993 until 1998 and Area Representative for Colombia and Venezuela from 1998 to 2001. Before joining UNICEF, he worked in Brazil as Technician for Multitron S.A. He holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Geology from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and in 1981 he received his Masters Degree in Hydrogeology and Hydrology from the Institute for Aerial Survey and Earth Sciences, Enschede, The Netherlands.

Amala de Silva, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Colombo
Prof. Amala de Silva graduated from the Department of Economics, University of Colombo in 1985 and has Masters (1988) and DPhil (1992) degrees from the University of Sussex, UK. She joined the University of Colombo as an Assistant Lecturer in 1986 and is currently a Professor in the Department of Economics. She teaches Public Finance, Macroeconomics and Gender Economics at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and undertakes teaching and supervision involving economics in courses conducted by the PGIM as well. Her research is mainly in the field of Health Economics, mostly involving costing, financing and poverty. In 1999-2000 she was a Global Health Leadership fellow at the WHO Headquarters in Geneva where she worked on responsiveness indicators for the World Health Report 2000.

Indralal De Silva, Dean, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo

S. Mahendra Dev, Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research
Prof. Dev is currently Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR) in Mumbai. He was Chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices of the Government of India. He was Director, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad for 9 years during 1999 to 2008. He received his PhD from the Delhi School of Economics and his Post-doctoral
research at the Economic Growth Centre, Yale University and was faculty member at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai for 11 years. He was Senior Fellow at the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation during 1996-97 and Visiting Professor at the University of Bonn in 1999. He has written extensively on agricultural development, poverty and public policy, food security, employment guarantee schemes, social security, farm and non-farm employment. He has been a consultant and adviser to several international organizations, such as UNDP, World Bank, International Food Policy Research Institute, ILO, FAO, and ESCAP. He also conducted collaborative projects with IFPRI on food security and poverty. He has been a member of several government committees including the Prime Minister’s Task Force on Employment and Rangarajan Commission on Financial Inclusion. He was member of several working groups for 9th, 10th and 11th Five Year Plans.

Diya Dutta, Research Analyst, South Asia Regional Office, UN Women
Ms. Dutta has been involved in research both academically and professionally since 2003. In 2005, she was awarded the Commonwealth Scholarship to read for the MPhil degree in Development Studies at University of Oxford. Her MPhil thesis was based on how the elderly in India negotiate new forms of vulnerabilities in the post economic liberalization era. She has a graduate degree in Sociology from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, New Delhi. Diya has recently completed work on gender relations in marriage with the School of Women’s Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata and is expecting her first academic publication this year. At UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women), she is Research Analyst in the Gender Responsive Governance programme for Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Prior to joining UN Women, South Asia Regional Office she was with the National Council of Applied Economic Research as a Consultant on the project on decentralization and rural governance.

Marina Faetanini, Program Specialist, Social and Human Sciences Sector and Regional Coordinator, UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia, UNESCO New Delhi
Ms. Faetanini the Program Specialist for Social and Human Sciences of UNESCO New Delhi and the Regional Coordinator of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia, which was launched in 2006. She has organized both the current Forum and the previous one, which was held in New Delhi in 2008, and several research meetings on different dimensions of Social Development. Ms. Faetanini is currently developing, within the framework of MOST (Management of Social Transformations) Program, a new set of activities focusing on capacity building of city professionals, and development and dissemination of good practices on social integration in urban settings. This entails the publication, with UN-HABITAT, of a Toolkit Historic Districts for All – India: A Social and Human Approach for Sustainable Revitalisation; the development of a policy paper and advocacy tool on the Right to the City in India – Responsibilities, Rights and
Citizenships; as well as the organisation of workshops and social policy dialogues on inclusive urban policies. Additional activities range from advocacy for UNESCO Convention against Doping in Sports to popularization of philosophy through the celebration of World Philosophy Days. Before taking up her current position in 2007, Ms. Faetanini worked at UNESCO Headquarters from 2003 to 2006 with the Foresight Section and with the Human Security, Democracy and Philosophy Section. Prior to joining UNESCO in 2003, Marina Faetanini worked as an environmental activist with the WWF on climate change related issues (2000 – 2003) and as a diplomat from the Republic of San Marino in the Council of Europe and the United Nations in New York (1992 – 2003). She holds a degree in Lettres et Sciences Humaines (Humanities) from the Ecole Normale Superieure of Saint-Cloud, France and a D.E.A (equivalent to M.A.) in Romance Studies from the University of La Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris.

Sirimali Fernando, Chairperson, National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka

Diarietou Gaye, Country Director for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, World Bank

Ms. Gaye, a Senegalese national, joined the Bank in January 1996 as a Country Economist, after serving 10 years in the Ministry of Finance in Senegal. She has since held various positions, including Country Manager for Benin and Togo for the Bank from 2002-06, and Senior Desk Economist at the IMF. Most recently, she has been on secondment to the African Development Bank as the AfDB’s Regional Director for Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and Seychelles. Ms. Gaye has had extensive operational experience in different institutions working on development and policy change. She also received the Good Manager Award from the Staff Association in 2005.

Cecilie Golden, Programme Specialist, Management of Social Transformations Programme, UNESCO

Ms. Golden is Programme Specialist for the Management of Social Transformations Programme of UNESCO. She graduated as Cand.Jur from the University of Oslo. During her legal studies she also took obtained diplomas from King’s College, United Kingdom, the Hague Academy of International Law and the United Nations Graduate School, Geneva. She took her Master of International Policy in California on a Fulbright Scholarship. Ms. Golden has been with UNESCO since 1997, first as Associate Expert financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, before being appointed Programme Specialist with the Organization. Her main functions consist of being co-ordinator for the Regional Fora of Ministers of Social Development and to contribute to UN meetings and co-operation within social development and social impacts of climate change. In addition to this she is Liaison Officer to the International Social Science Council (ISSC).
**Ramani Gunatilaka, Independent Consultant, Sri Lanka**

Ramani Gunatilaka has been working as a development economist in Sri Lanka since graduating from the Universities of London and Oxford in 1992-93. Her research has concentrated on poverty alleviation, rural development, microfinance and labour market issues in Sri Lanka, and more recently, on the determinants of subjective well-being in rural and urban China. In 2006 she received her PhD in Applied Econometrics from Monash University, Australia, for her thesis on income distribution in Sri Lanka after economic liberalization. She is an Adjunct Research Fellow of the Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University, and has published several articles in internationally refereed journals. She has worked as an independent consultant for many international organisations such as the ADB, GTZ, ILO, Sida, UNDP and the World Bank.

**Surustha Gunasekara, World Bank, Sri Lanka**

**Bindra Hada, Member Secretary, National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal**

Ms. Hada is Member Secretary of the National Planning Commission of Nepal. She has been working in the Government of Nepal for over 20 years. Her expertise is on social mobilization and public policy. Ms. Hada was Secretary for the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers of the Government of Nepal. She holds a Master’s Degree in Public Administration and a Bachelor’s Degree in Law.

**Syed Hashemi, BRAC Development Institute**

**S.T. Hettige, Professor of Sociology and Chair, Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre, University of Colombo**

**Reza Hossaini, Representative, UNICEF Sri Lanka**

Mr. Hossaini was appointed UNICEF Representative in Sri Lanka in 2010. He had previously worked in the same role in Turkey and Uzbekistan. Mr. Hossaini began his career with UNICEF in 1989 as Programme Coordinator in Iran. He served in South Sudan and Somalia before joining the World Health Organisation (WHO) as Polio Coordinator in the East Asia Region (1998-2002). In 2002, Mr. Hossaini returned to UNICEF as Senior Programme Coordinator in Afghanistan. He obtained his degree in Industrial Pharmacy from the College of Pharmacy of the Delhi University and a Post-graduate Degree in Hospital Management.
Rizwanul Islam, Former Special Adviser on Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction, Employment Sector, ILO
Dr. Islam is former Special Adviser on Growth, Employment and Poverty Reduction in the Employment Sector of ILO. His previous positions include Director, Economic and Labour Market Analysis, and other directorial positions at ILO. He has been Visiting Research Scholar at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Dhaka and is Visiting Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi. Dr. Islam did his PhD in Economics at the London School of Economics and Political Science under the supervision of Professor (Nobel Laureate) Amartya Sen. Dr. Islam specializes in development economics with a particular focus on employment, poverty and income distribution, and has published a number of journal articles and books in this field. The topics of Dr. Islam’s current research include (i) the challenge of jobless growth, employment intensity of economic growth and poverty reduction, and (ii) the impact of shocks like food price inflation and economic downturns on employment, poverty, and food security.

Narendra Jadhav, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India and Member, Nationa Advisory Council, Government of India
Dr. Narendra Jadhav, an Indian national is a leading educationist, eminent economist and policy maker, well-known social scientist and best-selling author. Dr. Narendra Jadhav is currently serving as a Member, Planning Commission (in the rank and status of Union Minister of State). He took over this responsibility on June 16, 2009 and was sworn in by the Prime Minister on July 27, 2009. Planning Commission is India’s apex policy-oriented Think Tank chaired by the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh with Shri Montek Singh Ahluwalia as the Deputy Chairman. As Member, Planning Commission, Dr. Jadhav’s sectoral responsibilities include Education, Labour-Employment-Skill Development, Sports & Youth Affairs, and Social Justice and Empowerment. In addition, Dr. Jadhav looks after the States of Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and Goa, besides the Union Territories of Diu-Daman and Dadra-Nagar Haveli. Dr. Narendra Jadhav has also been appointed as a Member, National Advisory Council (NAC), chaired by Smt. Sonia Gandhi, with effect from May 31, 2010. Dr. Jadhav holds a PhD in Economics from Indian University, and MA in Economics and a BSc in Statistics from Bombay University.

D.M. Jayaratne, Prime Minister, Government of Sri Lanka
Mr. Jayaratne attended Gampola Zahira College and Gandhi Vidyalaya, Kandy. He studied Communism at Peradeniya University. He was one of the pioneers of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. In 1965 he was elected President of Kandy District Village Council Association from which position he was elevated to the Presidency of All Island Village Councils Federation. He took to parliamentary politics in 1970 having contested and elected MP for Gampola Constituency in which position he continued till 1977. From 1989 to 1994
he served in Parliament as an opposition member. At the General Elections held in 1994 he was appointed Minister of Land, Agriculture and Forestry. He was also Minister of Agriculture, Food and Cooperatives in 2000, Minister of Posts and Telecommunication in 2003, Minister of Posts and Telecommunication, and Upcountry Development in 2004, Minister of Posts and Telecommunication, and Rural Economic Development in 2005 and Minister of Plantation Industries from 2007 to 2010. He was appointed as Prime Minister of Sri Lanka in 2010. He also holds the Cabinet Portfolio of Buddhhasana and Religious Affairs.

Ramanie Jayathilake, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo

K.N. Jehangir, Former Director and Consultant, Indian Council of Social Science Research

Dr. Jehangir completed his post-graduate studies and PhD from the University of Calcutta. He has worked in the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi. He then joined the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi. He retired as Director and reappointed as consultant of the ICSSR’s International Collaboration Programme. Dr. Jehangir has worked on gender, Indian minorities and election studies.

K.P. Kannan, Professor and Former Director, Centre for Development Studies – Thiruvananthapuram

Prof. Kannan is Professor and Former Director of the Centre for Development Studies. He was full-time Member of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector from 2005 to 2009. He was also an Expert Member in the Technical Secretariat of the World Commission on Social Dimension of Globalisation constituted by ILO in 2002 and 2003. He served as a Member of the Expert Group on Human Resource Development for Asia and Pacific constituted by UN/ESCAP between 1997 and 1999. From 1995 until 1997, he was Professor of Development Studies and Research Director at the Cambodia Development Resource Institute in Phnom Penh and helped establish a research division for the study of Cambodia’s development issues. Prof. Kannan holds a Master in Economics from the University of Bombay and a PhD in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies of the University of The Hague. His areas of specialization are Human Development and Labour Studies.

Sherin R. Khan, Senior Specialist on Child Labour, Decent Work Team for South Asia, ILO

Ms. Khan was appointed in 2007 as Senior Specialist on the ILO Decent Work Team (DWT) for South Asia. Focusing on child labour, policy, standards and technical cooperation programmes, she provides advisory services to ILO constituents and staff, promotes ratification and implementation of ILO child labour conventions, supports staff development, training, evaluations, and knowledge initiatives, and fosters partnerships with a wide
range of players. In 2010, she completed a brief tenure as Officer-in-Charge of the ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and Maldives. Ms. Sherin joined the ILO’s International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) team in Geneva in 1998. She headed its inter-regional Programme Support Unit and served as Senior Programme and Operations Officer for its Asia-Pacific programme, and various projects in Africa and the Americas. Her previous ILO field-based experience in Asia (1986-1998) encompassed publications and information networks under an Asia-Pacific project and development programming in Pakistan. In 1994, as the first IPEC National Programme Manager in the country, she mobilized resources, promoted broad-based partnerships that included the UN and the private sector, and designed and tested innovative strategies that were subsequently applied by IPEC in other regions. Ms. Khan served at the US Department of Labor’s Bureau of International Labor Affairs (2000-02) as Senior International Relations Officer and Coordinator for its global technical assistance child labour programme. She holds a Master’s Degree in Communication from the University of Illinois in Springfield and another Master’s Degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Peshawar.

Quomaran Nessa Khanam, Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh

Ms. Khanam was appointed Secretary of the Ministry of Social Services in 2009. She has been working for the Government of Bangladesh since the beginning of her career. She holds a Diploma in Development Administration and Management from IDPM, Manchester and an MA in Economics from Victoria University, Manchester.

Saba Gul Khattak, Member, Social Sector, Planning Commission of Pakistan

Dr. Khattak is a human rights activist and provides regular policy advice on women, governance and refugee issues to the government. Prior to joining Planning Commission she was the Executive Director of SDPI. She has undertaken research in areas like: Gender and Security, Trafficking of Children in Pakistan, Forms of Child Labour in Pakistan, Education and Child Labourers, Food Security for Refugees, Rehabilitation of Refugee Affected Areas in the NWFP and Balochistan, the Effects of Structural adjustment Policies on Women in Pakistan and Violence against Women. Dr. Khattak holds a Phd in Political Science.

Carol Le Duc, Team Leader, EU Technical Cooperation for Social Protection, Afghanistan

Ms. Le Duc is graduated from London (Psychology), and Oxford (Social Anthropology), and has spent over two decades working continuously in Afghanistan in public and private agencies, from policy to project level, and with extensive travel to many regions of the country. Her key areas of expertise have been on marginalised groups, including women in particular as well as children and the disabled. Since 2007 she has actively supported
Afghanistan's introduction of its first Social Protection Strategy, having made significant contributions to a support programme by the European Union under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled. The Programme aims to strengthen the Ministry's coordination of national social protection policy and intervention strategies, and leadership of a public - private partnership for social protection support to extremely vulnerable groups.

**Donglin Li, Country Director, ILO Sri Lanka and the Maldives**

Mr. Li was appointed Country Director of the ILO Country Office for Sri Lanka and the Maldives in 2011. He was previously Country Director of the ILO Office for Pakistan and has worked in Pakistan for six and half years. Mr. Li is a Chinese national. Mr Li holds a BSc in Chemical Engineering and Equipment from East China University for Science and Technology and an MBA from Heriot-Watt University, UK. Prior to joining the ILO in 2002, he was Director General of the International Cooperation Department in China’s Ministry of Labour and Social Security. In August 2010, the Government of Pakistan has conferred upon him the highest Presidential Award in recognition of his excellent services to the People of Pakistan.

**Elizabeth Longworth, Deputy Assistant Director-General, Social and Human Sciences Sector and Director, Division of Social Sciences Research and Policy, UNESCO**

Ms. Longworth is the Deputy Assistant Director-General of Social and Human Sciences Sector and Director of the Division of Social Sciences Research and Policy of UNESCO. She joined UNESCO in 2003 as Director of the Information Society Division in the Communication and Information Sector. She was the Executive Director of the Office of the Director-General from 2006 until 2009. Prior to her career in UNESCO, Ms. Longworth entered the legal profession in New Zealand in 1979. She was awarded a Master of Laws (LLM) in 1985 by York University, Canada. She ran an international specialist legal and consultancy practice based in New Zealand for over ten years, starting in 1991. during this period, she was at the forefront of developing new policy areas arising out of the global societal and ethical implications of new and transformative technologies, new forms of interaction (including dispute resolution), and the regulatory and policy frameworks governing access to and use information. She is a published author and researcher in these fields. In 2001, Ms. Longworth’s career focused on the issues of social and economic development, becoming a Sector at the then national economic development agency, Industry New Zealand. Her responsibilities involved working with a diverse range of stakeholders to develop and implement national strategies and policies that could promote growth and development. This included making links to global policies and then working on their adaptation to benefit the local environment.
Darshini Mahadevia, Professor, Faculty of Planning and Public Policy and Member Secretary, Centre for Urban Equity, CEPT University

Prof. Mahadevia joined CEPT University in 1994. She holds a Master’s Degree in Urban and regional Planning from the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA), New Delhi and a PhD from the Centre for Studies in Regional Development of the Jawaharlal Nehru University. She was Visiting Scholar at Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, of the University of California, Los Angeles, Visiting Scholar at the School of Urban Planning, McGill University, Visiting Fellow at Tsinghua University in Beijing and Visiting Fellow and Faculty at Tianjin University of Business and Economics in Tianjin. Prof. Mahadevia is also associated as Visiting Faculty with the Centre for Development Alternatives, Ahmedabad and on the boards of four NGOs in India working on pro-poor and pro-women development issues in urban and rural areas. She is active in many national and international research projects. Prof. Mahadevia is a published author on urban development, urban poverty, human and gender development issues.

Samandar Mahmodi, Deputy Director, Bromand Research Educational and Development Organization

Mr. Mahmodi has extensive experience in the field of research, monitoring and evaluation. Since 2007, he has worked in different USAID projects in the positions of Senior Research Monitoring and Evaluation Associate and Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. He worked with one of the Local Capacity Building Provision Institute, and served as a chief trainer in the fields of management, leadership, teambuilding, research, statistical analysis, monitoring and evaluation. Mr Samandar Mahmodi has also attended several professional trainings, such as the Monitoring and Evaluation Training in Bangkok, Statistical Analysis Training from USAID, and many others in Afghanistan provided by International organizations, such as the Technical Briefing Seminar (TBS) in WHO Headquarters in Geneva. In 2009, he funded the Bromand Research Educational and Development Organization (BREDO). Along with partners and donors, BREDO has provided trainings to staff of Ministry and Directorate of Women Affairs, conducted a campaign in two provinces of Afghanistan for fighting corruption, implemented a project through community elders to eliminate violence against women, and another project, supported by USAID to promote family planning products.

Naushin Mahmood, Professor, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics

Dr. Mahmood is a demographer with wide ranging experience of over 30 years in operational and formative research on demographic and social development related issues in Pakistan. She is Visiting Professor and Former Joint Director at Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). She obtained her Master’s Degree in Population Sciences from Harvard School of Public Health, Boston and her PhD in Sociology from University of Michigan. She has extensive experience of research in social development
issues of Pakistan and has a number of publications to her credit in national and international journals. Her specialized areas of research are demography, human resource development, gender issues, reproductive health/MCH and policy analysis, with expertise in survey research methods and data analysis. She has worked in close collaboration with the government institutions and provided short term technical assistance to international organization on Social Development, Poverty Reduction Strategy, Maternal and Neonatal Health, and Gender Issues.

Firdosi Rustom Mehta, WHO Representative to Sri Lanka
Dr. Mehta has over 30 years of public health experience and has worked in several countries and regions of the world. He served for 11 years in the Indian Navy Defence Services as a doctor and a public health specialist and later he served in the Ministry of Health, Sultanate of Oman in various capacities for 10 years, the last being Director of Surveillance and Disease Control at central level in Muscat, Oman. Dr Mehta then joined the WHO under the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office and worked in Somalia from 1998 – 2002, where he was responsible for supporting the control of TB and all other communicable diseases in a complex emergency situation. Dr. Mehta moved from Somalia to Indonesia in mid 2002 in the function of Country Advisor Tuberculosis Control Programme. He served in Indonesia for 7 years from 2002 to March 2009. Dr Mehta then moved to Sri Lanka in April 2009 as the WHO Representative and has been functioning in that capacity since then.

Bill Nicol, Head, Poverty Reduction and Growth Division, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Armoogum Parsuramen, Director and UNESCO Representative to India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka
Mr. Parsuramen took up his assignment as the Director of the UNESCO Office in New Delhi, and UNESCO Representative to India, Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka in 2009. He holds a B.A. Honours degree in Administration from the University of Mauritius. He started his career in the field of education as a secondary-school teacher, when he was also active in community service, first as an elected Village Councilor, and then as Chairman of his District Council. Between 1982 and 1995, Mr. Parsuramen was a Member of Parliament in Mauritius for four consecutive terms, during which he served as Minister of Education, Arts and Culture (1983-1991), and Minister of Education and Science (1991-1995). He was Chairman of the General Council of Ministers of Culture of the Organization of African Unity (1986-1989), and Chairman of the Caucus of African Ministers of Education and the Association for the Development of African Education (ADEA) in 1991-1995. Between 1983 and 1995, he was also Chairman of the Mauritius National Commission for UNESCO, and subsequently became the elected representative of the Republic of Mauritius on UNESCO’s Executive Board (1995-1996). In 1996, Mr. Parsuramen joined the World Bank, as an Education Policy Adviser and Coordinator of
the education component of the Bank’s United Nations Special Initiative for Africa (UNSIA). Joining the UNESCO Secretariat in July 1998, he was appointed Director of the Division for the Renovation of Secondary and Vocational Education in the Education Sector. In 2000, Mr. Parsuramen was appointed to the position of Director of the Regional Bureau for Education in Africa. In 2004, he was appointed Secretary of UNESCO Executive Board. Concurrently and from March 2008 to September 2009, he was entrusted with the expanded responsibility of Director of the Secretariat of the Governing Bodies, serving both as Secretary of UNESCO Executive Board and Secretary of the General Conference.

**Felix Perera, Minister, Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka**

Mr. Perera was elected ad Member of Western Provincial Council from Gampaha District in 1988 and Member of Parliament in 1994. From 1999 to 2000 he was Deputy Minister of Power and Energy. In 2004, Mr. Perera became the Minister of Transport. He was the Minister of Railways, and the Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in 2005. Mr. Perera was appointed as the Minister of Social Services in 2010. He studied at De La Salle College in Mutwal and Christ King College in Tudella.

**Jehan Perera, Executive Director, National Peace Council of Sri Lanka**

Mr. Perera is the Executive Director of the National Peace Council (NPC) of Sri Lanka which was established to facilitate a people's movement for peace, justice and reconciliation in Sri Lanka. NPC's work is primarily in the area of mobilisation, awareness creation and advocacy in line with its mission. Prior to joining NPC he headed the Sarvodaya Movement's legal aid services. He is also a member of several other non governmental organisations, including the People's Action for Free and Fair Elections. In addition, he has served on two government advisory bodies. He is also a political columnist for the Island (English language), Thulava (Sinhala language) and Thinakkural (Tamil Language) newspapers. He is also the recipient of peace awards, most recently the Sakai Peace Contribution Award from Japan. He had his higher education at Harvard University in the United States.

**Vijoy Prakash, Principal Secretary, Department of Planning and Development, Government of Bihar**

Mr. Prakash is Principal Secretary at the Department of Planning and Development of Government of Bihar. He has wide experience of working at senior positions in government in the area of Rural Development, Human Resources Development and Social Welfare. Earlier he was also Chairman cum Managing Director, Bihar State Industrial Development Corporation and Chairman, Bihar Sponge Iron Ltd. He is widely known for developing an innovative system of holistic education known as ‘Creative Learning’, especially useful for empowerment of underprivileged. He has authored several books for the development of concentration, memory, imagination, visualization, and emotional management.
Rohan Prithviraj Perera, Secretary General, Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO

A Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Sri Lanka (FCA), he has been in senior managerial positions in multinational corporations, such as Unilever in Sri Lanka and Pang Industries S.A. in France, and has had a long service career with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO), serving both in its Headquarters in Paris and in the Sub-Regional Office in New Delhi, India. On behalf of UNESCO, he was closely involved in the capacity building of the Jaffna Library, the nomination of the Central Highlands of Sri Lanka as World Heritage and in the initiation and popularization of UNESCO’s Learning the Way of Peace – A Teachers Guides to Peace Education. He has written and published articles on culture, heritage and peace-building. He presently serves as the Secretary General of the Sri Lanka National Commission for UNESCO, and is also President of the National Association for Canoeing and Kayaking in Sri Lanka (NACKSL) and an Executive Board Member of the National Olympic Committee (NOC) in Sri Lanka. He is an active participant in the UNESCO Executive Board, on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka.

Ahmad Farid Raaid, Senior Advisor to Minister on Public Relations and Communications, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled, Islamic Government of Afghanistan

Mr. Raaid was appointed Senior Advisor to Minister on Public Relations and Communications in 2010. He was previously Media and Public Relations Director, and Spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Health from 2008 to 2010, Executive Director of Public Awareness Coordination Association in 2008, Program Medical Coordinator of Medecins du Monde in 2007, Project Support Coordinator of the Laghman Radio Stations Project from 2006 to 2007, Program Manager of the Novice Journalism Training Program in 2006 and National Project Coordinator of the Novice Journalism Program in 2005, Project Manager of the Internews Training Project from 2004 to 2005 and Publishing Director of the Internews Training Project from 2003 to 2004.

Md. Moshiur Rahman, Director General (Additional Secretary), Department of Social Services, Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh

Mr. Rahman started his career in the Government of Bangladesh in the 1980s. He had also been associated with the United Nations in Asia and Africa. Mr. Rahman holds a Master’s Degree in Accounting from Rajshahi University, Bangladesh and an MBA from Eastern University, Bangladesh.
Shehan Ratnavale, UNESCO Consultant and Focal Point for UNDAF and Programmes

Mr. Ratnavale has spent much of his early career in the banking and corporate sector. In April 2005 he was appointed Sri Lanka’s High Commissioner to Singapore concurrently accredited to Brunei Darussalam. As High Commissioner he was engaged in the diverse involvements that the role entailed including areas such: the Asia-Middle East Dialogue, The Shangri-La Dialogue, the IMF-World Bank Conference, tsunami reconstruction, investment and trade promotion, cultural exchanges and tourism promotion. Amongst the progressive initiatives undertaken during his three and a half years in Singapore was: an annual networking event to benefit Sri Lanka's up and coming software/BPO industry; an ambassadorial tour visit to Sri Lanka for Singapore based ambassadors and dignitaries and the setting up of a forum of expatriate Sri Lankan scientists in Singapore. Mr Ratnavale was contracted by UNESCO as a Consultant and Focal Point for the UNDAF and Programmes in Sri Lanka in March 2010, and also functions as an observer member of the UN country team.

Lal Ratnaweera, Director (Planning), Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka

D. Narasimha Reddy, Visiting Professor, Institute for Human Development

Prof. Reddy is currently a Visiting Professor at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi. He retired as Professor of Economics and Dean, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad. His specializations are Political Economy of Development, Labour Economics and Agrarian Studies. He has supervised dissertations of a large number of MPhil and PhD scholars. He has been a member of several academic bodies, and past Conference President of the Indian Society of Labour Economics. He served as a member of some of the expert committees of the State and Central governments.

Andrea Rossi, Regional Advisor for Social and Economic Policy, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia

Mr. Rossi is the UNICEF Regional Advisor for Social and Economic Policy in the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia. He was previously the Director of the Measurement and Human Rights Program at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in the Harvard Carr Center for Human Rights Policy. Earlier he worked for ILO and UNICEF in the area of research and evidence based policy. An economist by training with a focus on development and applied research, he has taught courses on Human Rights Policy Analysis at Harvard and in Italy, and on Research Methods with Hidden and Marginal Populations.
Markus Ruck, Senior Social Security Specialist, Decent Work Team for South Asia, ILO India

Before joining the ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia in June 2009 as Senior Social Security Specialist, Mr. Markus Ruck of German nationality served for nearly six years as Senior Social Security Specialist at the ILO Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa in Harare, Zimbabwe. Prior to his assignment in Harare, he worked for eight years at the ILO Sub-Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe in Budapest, Hungary, as Social Security Specialist. Before joining the ILO Office in Budapest, Mr. Ruck worked for more than three years at the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Bonn as Senior Social Security Specialist.

Ashok Sahu, Senior Advisor, Labour and Employment, Planning Commission, Government of India

Sunil Samaraweera, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka

Mr. Samaraweera was appointed Additional Secretary to the Ministry of Social Services in 2007. He was previously Director and Registrar of the National Secretariat for NGOs and Director of the Children Secretariat from 2001 to 2003, Commissioner of the Department of probation and children Services in 2004 and Senior Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Social Services and Social Welfare from 2003 to 2007. Mr. Samaraweera holds a Bachelor Degree in Management and Economics from the University of Colombo.

Inoka Sandanayake, National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka

Asad Sayeed, Director, Collective of Social Science Research

Dr. Asad Sayeed is a Ph.D in Economics from Cambridge University. His is currently Director at the Collective of Social Science Research, a Karachi-based research and consulting organization. He has been the Convener of the Social Protection Sub-Committee of the Panel of Economists constituted by the Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan in 2008. He was also a member of the Task Force on Health Policy Constituted by the Federal Government in May 2008. Dr. Sayeed has worked on different facets of social protection, including cash transfers, employment programs, old age benefits, social health insurance and disaster insurance. He has also authored the zero draft of the National Social Protection Policy for the Government of Pakistan in August 2010. Dr. Sayeed has worked on Social Protection with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the International Labour Organization (ILO). His other areas of research interest include Political Economy of Growth and Structural Change, Industrial Policy in
Developing Countries, Labour Market Dynamics in Developing Countries, Health Economics, Macroeconomic Policy and the Political Economy of Corruption.

Mariyam Shafeeq, Director General, National Social Protection Agency, Ministry of Health and Family, Republic of Maldives

Enamul Hoque Mostofa Shaheed, Minister, Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh
Mr. Shaheed was nominated Minister of Social Welfare in 2009. He is a freedom fighter and veteran Awami Leaguer. He completed his graduation from Bindaban College, Hobigonj and LLB from Dhaka University. He was elected six times as Member of Parliament from Chunarughat-Madabppur, Hobigonj in the 1970, 1973, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2008 elections. He was the member of the Standing Committee for Land Ministry in the Fifth National Assembly. He was Chairperson of the Standing Committee for Planning Ministry and Member for Land Ministry in the 1996-2001 Parliament.

Alakh N. Sharma, Professor and Director, Institute for Human Development
Prof. Sharma is presently Professor and Director of the Institute for Human Development (IHD) of New Delhi. Earlier he was a Senior Visiting Fellow, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi; Advisor (Research), V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, Noida; Professor, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations, New Delhi; and a faculty member, A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies, Patna for several years. He has made significant contributions to research in areas such as poverty, migration, employment and labour markets. He has authored/edited/co-edited twelve books and published over three dozen research papers in various journals. He is also an editor of the Indian Journal of Labour Economics, the quarterly journal of the Indian Society of Labour Economics and co-editor of the Indian Journal of Human Development, the bi-annual Journal brought out by IHD.

Ambika Sharma, Research and Partnerships Officer, Regional Office for South Asia and China, International Development Research Centre
Dr. Sharma is the Research & Partnerships Officer at International Development Research Centre’s Regional Office for South Asia and China in New Delhi. In her current profile she works with the Regional Director’s office on deepening the Centre's understanding on research issues and gaps across the Centre’s programs active in the region. She also supports the regional partnerships exploration and development efforts. She brings with her an experience of 10+ years in the development sector. She holds a PhD in Ecosystem Planning, Open Universities Australia; MA, Town and Country Planning (specialization in Environmental Planning) from the School of Planning and Architecture
Assam. Poverty, President was the involved Export Products Centre various of consultant Chandrasiri K. (SPA), New Delhi and MA, Geography from the Delhi School of Economics, New Delhi. She also has a certificate in establishing web based social business ventures from the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Santa Clara University, USA.

Mr. Shenoy is the National President of the Indian Council of Social Welfare and President of the International Council of Social Welfare for the South Asia Regional Committee. He is also an international consultant on child welfare. He retired in 1992 as Resident Director of the Marine Products Export Development Authority of the Ministry of Commerce and is now involved in social service activities.

Ranjit Sinha, Member Secretary, Indian Council of Social Science Research
Dr. Sinha has been Member Secretary of the Indian Council of Social Science Research since 2009. He was previously associated with ICSSR as Director. Dr. Sinha was awarded a PhD from the University of North Bengal. He held the post of Director of the International Education Consortium, New Delhi during 1980s to early 1990s. He was Secretary to the Indian Social Sciences Delegation to Soviet Union and to China (1984 and 1986). He was appointed Executive Member of the Science Council of Asia (SCA), Japan and Vice President of the SCA in 2004. He is Advisor to Bodoland Territorial Council, Kokrajhar, Assam. He has worked on a wide range of projects focusing on Election Studies, Crimes, Poverty, Unemployment, Income Distribution and Rural Development.

K. Tudor Silva, National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka

Chandrasiri Sooriyarachchi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Social Services, Government of Sri Lanka

Nisha Srivastava, Professor of Economics, University of Allahabad
Nisha Srivastava teaches Economics at the University of Allahabad, India. She has earlier worked with the UN World Food Programme (WFP), New Delhi, where, as Head of the Vulnerability Analysis, and Monitoring and Evaluation unit she led the WFP team to collaborate with the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation in publishing the Report on Food Security for Rural India. Food Security Atlases for various states were prepared jointly by the Institute for Human Development, and the WFP team under her supervision. She was the co-author of the first Human Development Report for Uttar Pradesh. Her research interests include issues of food security, gender, labour and employment, and social protection. She has worked on projects with several national and international organisations including the Planning
Commission, UNDP, World Bank, JPIC, ESRC and IDRC among others. Some of her recent publications (with co-authors) include: The Justice of Eating: An Assessment of Inclusion and Exclusion in WFP’s Programmes; Women, Work and Employment Outcomes in Rural India; Integrated Child Development Services: Policy, Design, and Delivery Issues, Contextualising Violence At Macro And Micro Levels: The Multiple Dimensions Of Violence Against Women In Uttar Pradesh, India. She is deeply involved in working with organisations that seek to empower women and marginalised social groups.

Ravi Srivastava, Professor of Economics and Chairman of the Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Prof. Srivastava is Professor of Economics and Chairman of the Centre for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University. He is a member of the Governing Council of the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR). His research interests focus on labour migration, human development, rural poverty and decentralization. He was Visiting Fellow and Professor at the University of Oxford, Osaka and Amsterdam. He served as a full-time Member of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector. He was in charge of major research projects sponsored by several international organizations, government agencies and NGOs. Prof. Srivastava received his education from the Delhi School of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. He holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge.

Ramya Subrahmanian, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF India

Dr. Subrahmanian is currently working as Social Policy Specialist at UNICEF India. She was formerly Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, where she conducted research and published papers and edited books on issues of gender and development, education, social exclusion and child rights.

Tshewang Tandin, Director General, Ministry of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan

Mr. Tandin’s career in education started in 1980s as Principal of several schools in Bhutan. He joined the Ministry of Education in 2001 as Joint Director for School Education and he was promoted Director in 2003. He was appointed Director General of the Ministry of Education in 2009. Mr. Tandin holds Master’s Degree from the University of London and the University of New England, Australia.

Rukmini Tankha, Consultant, Social and Human Sciences Sector, UNESCO New Delhi

Ms. Tankha is currently working as a Consultant for the Social and Human Sciences of the UNESCO New Delhi office. She has previously been involved in research and communication for the Social Protection
in Asia (SPA) network at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi. She holds completed her Master’s Degree in Development Studies from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai and a Bachelor’s Degree in Mathematics from St. Stephen’s College, University of Delhi. Her research interests include livelihoods and social protection, labour, employment and the informal sector, and gender.

**G.V.D. Tilakasiri, Secretary, National Peace Council of Sri Lanka**  
Mr. Tilakasiri holds a Degree in Business Studies from the University of Kelaniya, a Honorary Doctorate in Public Administration and Good Governess form South Asian Academy for Good Governess and a Professional Doctorate in Management from the Global University for Lifelong Learning California. Mr. Tilakasiri is the President of the Free Trade Union Development Center and the General Secretary of the Joint Committee of Democratic Trade Unions. He was General Secretary of the National Peace Council of Sri Lanka. Mr. Tilakasiri is the Convenor of the Sri Lanka Chapter of International Council of Social welfare (ICSW) and the Treasurer of ICSW South Asia Region. He serves as Administrative Officer of the Presidential Secretariat and Political Secretary to the Honorable Minister of National Languages and Social Integration.

**Bishwa Nath Tiwari, Professor of Economics, Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University**  
Dr. Tiwari is Professor of Economics at the Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University in Nepal. He has PhD in Economics from Rajasthan University and MSc in Environmental and Resource Economics from London University. He is the lead author of Nepal Human Development Report 2009. He has extensive research experience in the fields of human development, poverty and inequality, food insecurity and vulnerability, drinking water and sanitation, and monitoring & evaluation. His current research focuses on poverty and human development in the Asia Pacific Region. Dr. Tiwari has offered professional services to various governmental and non-governmental organizations, donors and UN agencies, and contributed to the preparation of the various editions of Nepal Human Development Report, and Millennium Development Goal Progress Report.

**Indra Tudawe, Head, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, UNICEF Sri Lanka**

**Choragudi Upendranadh, Asia Regional Coordinator, Just and Democratic Governance, ActionAid**  
Mr. Upendranath is working as Asia Regional Coordinator for Just and Democratic Governance at ActionAid in Bangalore facilitating promotion of transparency, accountability and participatory democracy at different levels. He worked earlier, for over 3 years, as Regional Coordinator of SPA programme at the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi. His areas of interest
include issues of governance, human development, solidarity movements and sustainability.

**Cynthia Veliko, Senior Human Rights Adviser, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sri Lanka**

**Rohini Wijayaratne, National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka**

**Mohamed Zahid, Founder Member and Technical Advisor, Maldives NGO Federation**

Mr. Zahid is the Founder Member and Technical Advisor of the Maldives NGO Federation. He is also the former Vice-President of the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives. He had previously worked on UNDP and UNOPS funded projects programs throughout the country. He played a leading role in the South Asia Poverty Alleviation Program and Atoll Development for Sustainable Livelihoods project. While Mr. Zahid was engaged in social mobilization, he also took part in the formation and advocated the role of civil society organizations. Mr. Zahid has a vast array of practical knowledge on social mobilization and decentralization process in the Maldives and the region.
PRESS RELEASES
Dear Media Partners,

On the occasion of the World Day of Social Justice, celebrated on 20 February since 2009, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Ministry of Social Services of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka are jointly organizing, in Colombo, the Third Meeting of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers of Social Development from South Asia on Social Protection Policies in South Asia (20-22 February 2011). A multiplicity of stakeholders, including ministers, senior officials, researchers, scholars and the civil society, will engage in social policy dialogue over social protection measures designed for the benefit of the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded. It is hoped that this initiative will raise awareness and foster commitment towards the development of social protection policies based on high quality research.

The meeting will include:

- Inauguration by Hon. D.M. Jayaratne, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, H.E. Mr. Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Sri Lanka and Ms. Pilar Alvarez-Laso, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences

**Theme: Social Protection Policies in South Asia**

**Sessions on:**

- Country experiences - Learning and Sharing: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India
- Country experiences - Learning and Sharing: Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
- Excluded Groups in Social Protection Schemes (migrants and urban poor)
- Employment-led Strategies for Social Protection in South Asia
- Social Protection Measures for Children
- A Social Protection Floor for South Asia?
- Adoption of a Ministerial Declaration on Social Protection in South Asia

**Main Speakers**

- Several Ministers (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka)
- High-Level Representatives (Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan)
- Representatives of UN agencies, NGOs and researchers from across South Asia
Press Release no. 10/11

Sri Lanka hosts the Third Meeting of UNESCO Forum of Ministers on Social Protection Policies in South Asia


The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Hon’ble D. M. Jayaratne, will address the Inaugural Session on Sunday 20 February 2011 as the Chief Guest and Hon’ble Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services and Ms. Pilar Alvarez-Laso, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, will deliver a speech as Guests of Honour. This will coincide with the celebration of the World Day of Social Justice, recognizing the importance of promoting human dignity, harmony and equality of opportunity.

The participants of the meeting include, Ministers from Afghanistan (Hon. Ms Amina Afzali), Bangladesh (Hon. Mr Enamul Haq Mostafa Shahid), Sri Lanka (Hon. Mr Felix Perera) and High-level Representatives from Bhutan (Mr Tshewang Tandin), India (Dr Narendra Jadhav), Maldives (Ms Mariya Ali), Nepal (Ms Bindra Hada) and Pakistan, as well as over 50 researchers and scholars, social activists, representatives of UN agencies and international organizations from across South Asia, who will engage in social policy dialogue over social protection measures designed for the benefit of the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded.

It is hoped that this initiative will raise awareness and foster commitment towards the development of social protection policies based on high quality research. This is especially important given the findings of the UNESCO World Social Science Report 2010, revealing the marginal presence of South Asia in the domain of international social science research and its limited impact on policy making. Ministers and high-level officials of SAARC countries are expected to sign a Declaration at the end of the Forum, solidifying their commitment to expanding the scope and outreach of social protection policies and programmes and advancing the agenda for a universal social protection floor initiative for the South Asia region.

The Regional Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development was launched by UNESCO, within the framework of its Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme, in South Asia in 2006. The first Forum in Bhurban, Pakistan focused on Governance and Public Accountability and the second Forum in 2008 in New Delhi, India focused on Transparency, Right to Information and Social Development.

UNESCO works to create conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based upon respect for commonly shared values. UNESCO’s mission is to contribute to the building of peace, eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. The Forum is supported by numerous partners such as the Indian

Interested media wishing to cover the event may please contact:

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Ms Rekha Beri
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Ministers of South Asia sign Declaration for Strengthening Social Protection Policies

New Delhi, 25 February 2011: The Third Meeting of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia, jointly organized by UNESCO and the Ministry of Social Services of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, on Social Protection Policies in South Asia, concluded on 22 February 2011 with the adoption of a political Declaration, affirming political will and determination to promote and expand the scope of social protection policies in the region.

In the Declaration, Ministers and Heads of Delegations including Hon. Ms Amena S. Afzali from Afghanistan, Hon. Mr Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shaheed from Bangladesh, Hon. Mr Felix Perera from Sri Lanka, Mr Tshewang Tandin from Bhutan, Dr Narendra Jadhav from India, Ms Mariya Ali from Maldives, and Ms Bindra Hada from Nepal agreed to, among other commitments, “increase public funding to build the capacities of the social sciences in the region, through evidence based research, analysis and statistics; adopt a comprehensive approach to social protection, encompassing preventive, protective and promotional measure that address both individual and community risks and deprivations; strive to move towards a universalized, rights-based, gender sensitive approach in the extension of social protection and advance the agenda for a social protection floor in the region, ensuring universal access to essential social transfers and services”.

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Hon. D. M. Jayaratne addressed the Inaugural Session of the meeting on Sunday 20 February 2011, which held special significance as it coincided with the celebration of the World Day of Social Justice, recognizing the importance of promoting human dignity, harmony and equality of opportunity. The celebration of this event for the first time in Sri Lanka highlighted the importance of social inclusion and cohesion among the challenges of development.

“Social justice is at the heart of UNESCO’s mandate, which contributes to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, sciences and culture”, said Ms Pilar Alvarez-Laso, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO, while highlighting the need to mitigate the effects of the financial and economic crises that have thrown spotlight on the significance of social protection policies.

The Forum enabled exchange between social science researchers and policy makers, facilitated the exchange of experiences and best practices on national policies of the participating Ministries, highlighted the need for the advancement of social research on neglected themes and excluded groups such as the migrants
and the urban poor and increased awareness about the Social Protection Floor Initiative and its practical eligibility in South Asia.

The Forum was supported by numerous partners such as the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), International Development and Research Centre (IDRC), International Labour Organization (ILO), Social Protection in Asia network (SPA), Institute for Human Development (IHD), Sri Lankan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, National Science Foundation, International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW), Jawaharlal Nehru University and Sri Lankan Airlines.

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For a full version of the declaration please see:


For more information, please contact:

Ms. Rekha Beri
Documentalist and Public Information
(r.beri@unesco.org)
PRESS CLIPPINGS
Inauguration
Prime Minister D M Jayaratne and UNESCO Assistant Director General for Social and Human Sciences Pilar Alvarez Lasso light the oil lamp to inaugurate the UNESCO Forum of Ministers on social protection policies in South Asia in Colombo Sunday.
Picture by Susantha Wijegunasekara

Social development initiatives underway

DHARMA SRI ABЕYРАТНЕ

Social protection policies play a vital role in social change while achieving development goals, Prime Minister D M Jayaratne said.

The Prime Minister said so participating at the third meeting of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development Forum of South Asia. The forum began on February 20 and concludes today.

Addressing the forum, the Prime Minister said that the focus of the forum ‘Social Protection Policies in South Asian Countries’, is a relevant theme, that would afford the participating countries to discuss at length, the social protection policies implemented in their countries. There will be healthy exchange of ideas, perspectives, views and country experiences in the formulation and implementation of social protection policies by each of the member that will come in good stead in making realistic assessments. Evaluation would help reformulate or reshape their individual country policies to provide greater benefits to their citizens, Prime Minister Jayaratne said.

The Prime Minister added that not only developed countries but also developing countries have taken social protection initiatives in conformation with the level of their economies.

Sri Lanka has already implemented several initiatives for social development and social change, the Prime Minister said.
On the occasion of the World Day of Social Justice, which falls on February 20 and has been celebrated for the past two years, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) together with the Ministry of Social Service would jointly host the UNESCO forum of ministers in charge of social development from South Asia. The meeting on Social Protection Policies in South Asia would be held in Colombo with Prime Minister D.M. Jayaratne due to address the inaugural session on Sunday (20) as the Chief Guest. Minister of Social Services Felix Perera and Ms. Pilar Alvarez-Laso, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, would also deliver speeches as Guests of Honour. The event seeks to recognize the importance of promoting human dignity, harmony and equal opportunities to all. The participants of the meeting include Ministers from Afghanistan (Ms. Amina Afzali), Bangladesh (Mr. Enamul Haq Mostafa Shahid), Sri Lanka (Mr. Felix Perera) and High-level Representatives from Bhutan (Mr. Tshewang Tandin), India (Dr. Narendra Jadhav), Maldives (Ms. Mariya Ali) and Nepal (Ms. Bindra Hada) and Pakistan, as well as over 50 researchers and scholars, social activists, representatives of UN agencies and international organizations from across South Asia, who will engage in social policy dialogue over social protection measures designed for the benefit of the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded.
Sri Lanka hosts the Third Meeting of UNESCO Forum of Ministers on Social Protection Policies in South Asia

Wed, 2011-02-16 03:44 — editor


The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, D. M. Jayaratne, will address the Inaugural Session on Sunday 20 February, as the Chief Guest and Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services and Ms. Pilar Alvarez-Laso, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, will deliver a speech as Guests of Honour. This will coincide with the celebration of the World Day of Social Justice, recognizing the importance of promoting human dignity, harmony and equality of opportunity.

The participants of the meeting include, Ministers from Afghanistan Ms Amina Afzali, Bangladesh Mr
Enamul Haq Mostafa Shahid, Sri Lanka Mr Felix Perera and High-level Representatives from Bhutan Mr Tshewang Tandin, India Dr Narendra Jadhav, Maldives Ms Mariya Ali, Nepal Ms Bindra Hada and Pakistan, as well as over 50 researchers and scholars, social activists, representatives of UN agencies and international organizations from across South Asia, who will engage in social policy dialogue over social protection measures designed for the benefit of the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded.

It is hoped that this initiative will raise awareness and foster commitment towards the development of social protection policies based on high quality research.

This is especially important given the findings of the UNESCO World Social Science Report 2010, revealing the marginal presence of South Asia in the domain of international social science research and its limited impact on policy making.

Ministers and high-level officials of SAARC countries are expected to sign a Declaration at the end of the Forum, solidifying their commitment to expanding the scope and outreach of social protection policies and programmes and advancing the agenda for a universal social protection floor initiative for the South Asia region.

The Regional Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development was launched by UNESCO, within the framework of its Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme, in South Asia in 2006. The first Forum in Bhurban, Pakistan focused on Governance and Public Accountability and the second Forum in 2008 in New Delhi, India focused on Transparency, Right to Information and Social Development.

UNESCO works to create conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based upon respect for commonly shared values. UNESCO’s mission is to contribute to the building of peace, eradication of poverty, sustainable development and intercultural dialogue through education, the sciences, culture, communication and information. The Forum is supported by numerous partners such as the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), International Development and Research Centre (IDRC), International Labour Organisation (ILO), Social Protection in

- Asian Tribune -

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The meeting of UNESCO forum of Ministers on social protection policies in South Asia begins in Colombo.

Sunday, 20 February 2011 22:04
The third meeting of UNESCO forum of Ministers on social protection policies in South Asia began in Cinnamon Lakeside Hotel in Colombo this evening under the patronage of Prime Minister D.M Jayarathe and Minister Felix Perera.

Social welfare ministers from Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives and Afghanistan are participating in this meeting. The meeting coincides with the celebration of the world day of social justice, recognizing the importance of promoting human dignity, harmony and equality of opportunity. Ministers and high level officials of SAARC countries are expected to sign a declaration at the end of the forum on Tuesday, solidifying their commitment to expanding the scope and outreach of social protection policies.
S. Asia's social development ministers meet in Colombo
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4 මා දින
A political declaration, affirming political will and determination to promote and expand the scope of social protection policies in the South Asia region, was adopted recently at the Third Meeting of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development for South Asia.

The meeting, held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, focused on “Social Protection Policies in South Asia”, in order to raise awareness and foster commitment towards the development of social protection policies based on high quality research.

In the Colombo Declaration, ministers and heads of delegations agreed, among other commitments to: “increase public funding to build the capacities of the social sciences in the region, through evidence-based research, analysis and statistics; adopt a comprehensive approach to social protection, encompassing preventive, protective and promotional measure that address both individual and community risks and deprivations; strive to move towards a universalized, rights-based, gender-sensitive approach in the extension of social protection and advance the agenda for a social protection floor in the region, ensuring universal access to essential social transfers and services.”

the nations through education, sciences and culture”, said Ms. Pilar Alvarez-Laso, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO, highlighting the need to mitigate the effects of the financial and economic crises that have thrown the spotlight on the significance of social protection policies.

According to the Human Development Report 2010 and its Multidimensional Poverty Index, half of the world’s poor; an estimated 844 million people, live in South Asia.

The Human Development Report (2009) reveals that Asia displays the highest intra-regional migration in the world. Migrants are often ineligible to receive social protection benefits owing to the fact that they constitute “floating populations”. The forum enabled dialogue between social science researchers and policy makers, which is particularly important given the findings of the UNESCO World Social Science Report 2010, which revealed the marginal presence of South Asia in the domain of international social science research and its limited impact on policy making.

The meeting also facilitated the exchange of experiences and best practices on social protection policies; highlighted the need
Jointly organized by UNESCO and the Ministry of Social Services of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the meeting involved ministers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and high-level representatives from Bhutan, India, Maldives and Nepal, as well as over 50 researchers and scholars, social activists, representatives of UN agencies and international organizations from across South Asia, who engaged in social policy dialogue over social protection measures designed for the benefit of the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded.

“Social justice is at the heart of UNESCO’s mandate, which contributes to peace and security by promoting collaboration among for the advancement of social research on neglected themes and excluded groups such as migrants and the urban poor; and increased awareness about the Social Protection Floor Initiative and its practical eligibility in South Asia.

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Hon. D.M. Jayaratne addressed the inaugural session of the meeting on Sunday 20 February 2011. This event held special significance as it coincided with the celebration of World Day of Social Justice, which recognizes the importance of promoting human dignity, harmony and equality of opportunity.

Contact: m.faetanini@unesco.org
r.tankha@unesco.org
SECTOR ACTIVITIES

UNESCO MSS Forum of Ministers on Social Protection Policies in South Asia

The Third Meeting of the UNESCO Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development from South Asia was held on 20-22 February 2011, Colombo, Sri Lanka. It was jointly organized by UNESCO New Delhi and the Ministry of Social Services of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. The meeting focused on Social Protection Policies in South Asia, in order to raise awareness and foster commitment towards the development of social protection policies based on high quality research. The participants included, ministers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and high-level representatives from Bhutan, India, Maldives and Nepal, as well as over 80 researchers and scholars, social activists, representatives of UN agencies and international organizations from across South Asia, who engaged in social policy dialogue over social protection measures designed for the benefit of the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded.

The Forum facilitated the exchange of experiences and best practices on social protection policies of the participating countries, highlighted the need for the advancement of social research on neglected themes and excluded groups such as the migrants and the urban poor and increased awareness about the Social Protection Floor Initiative and its practical eligibility in South Asia.

The Forum concluded with the adoption of a political Declaration, affirming political will and determination to promote and expand the scope of social protection policies in the region. In the Declaration, Ministers and Heads of Delegations including Hon’ble Ms Amena S. Afzali from Afghanistan, Hon’ble Mr Enamul Hoque Mostafa Shaheed from Bangladesh, Hon’ble Mr Felix Perera from Sri Lanka, Mr Tshewang Tandin from Bhutan, Dr Narendra Jadhav from India, Ms Mariya Ali from Maldives, and Ms Bindra Hada from Nepal agreed to, among other commitments, “pledge to increase public funding to build the capacities of the social sciences in the region, through evidence based research, analysis and statistics; commit to adopt a comprehensive approach to social protection, encompassing preventive, protective and promotional measures that address both individual and community risks and deprivations, while not disregarding traditional systems of social assistance; strive to move towards a universalized, rights-based, gender sensitive approach in the extension of social protection, providing dignity and voice to the poor and vulnerable and fostering equity, inclusion and citizenship; advance the agenda for a social protection floor, ensuring universal access to essential social transfers and services, adapted to specific country contexts”.

The Forum was supported by numerous partners such as the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), Social Protection in Asia network (SPA), Institute for Human Development (IHD), Sri Lankan National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO, National Science Foundation (NSF), Jawaharlal Nehru University and Sri Lankan Airlines.

For a full version of the declaration please see: http://portal.unesco.org/geo/ev.php-URL_ID=13795&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Contact: Marina Faetanini (m.faetanini@unesco.org)
In this edition
Japan’s earthquake and tsunami
South Asia UNESCO Forum on social protection
UNICEF e-learning programme – social-economic policies for child rights
Food crisis continues – UNICEF analysis
From UNRISD
28th Annual Social Work Day at the United Nations
Free ‘How to’ guides by KnowHowProfit

Japan’s earthquake and tsunami
The terrible and destructive events in Japan have both an immediate and long term impact on the people of Japan. Christian Rollet, ICSW President has been in contact with Mr Chikashi Matsuju Executive Director of our member in Japan – the Japanese National Committee of ICSW. ICSW joins with so many others who have expressed their support and sympathy for the losses that have hit so many.

South Asia UNESCO Forum on social protection

From left: Ms Bindra Hada Member Secretary National Planning Commission Nepal; Hon Mr Felix Perera Minister of Social Service, Sri Lanka; Ms Elizabeth Longworth, UNESCO Deputy Assistant Director General for Social and Human Sciences and Director of Social Research Policy

ICSW was well represented at the UNESCO Forum of South Asia Ministers in charge of Social Development held in February 2011. The topic was social protection policies in South Asia. A S Shenoy, ICSW Regional President for South Asia presented in a session on a social protection floor for South Asia. The Forum was hosted by Mr Felix Perera, Minister of Social Services, Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.
The ministers in their declaration arising from the meeting recognised they were “Driven by the urgency to counteract the devastating impact of the global financial and economic crisis, including the food crisis, especially on the poor population of our countries”. In their commitment to action the ministers agreed to inter alia:

- “Commit to adopt a comprehensive approach to social protection, encompassing preventative, protective and promotional measures that address both individual and community risks and deprivations, while not disregarding traditional systems of social assistance;
- Recognise the need for expanding the scope and benefits of social protection to the most neglected and vulnerable sections of society such as, informal workers, migrants, persons with disabilities, the urban poor and other marginalised groups facing discrimination and exclusion;
- Emphasise child-sensitive social protection initiatives as an effective strategy to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and reduce socio-economic disparities;
- Build institutional and governance capacities and preparedness in delivery of social protection programmes, and ensure their regular monitoring and evaluation;
- Prioritise financing for social protection measures in national expenditure plans;
- Strive to move towards a universalised, rights-based, gender sensitive approach in the extension of social protection, providing dignity and voice to the poor and vulnerable and fostering equity, inclusion and citizenship;
- Advance the agenda for a social protection floor, ensuring universal access to essential social transfers and services, adapted to specific country contexts;
- Strengthen regional cooperation among our countries in enriching the field of social protection research and outreach…” (Note these are only some of the recommendations and actions. For the full declaration go to http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001914/191402e.pdf)

Left - Ms Marina Faetanini UNESCO Programme Specialist Social and Human Sciences based in Delhi and responsible for organising the ministers’ forum.
Right – AS Shenoy ICSW Regional President for South Asia
REGIONAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER – SOUTH ASIA
MARCH – APRIL 2011

In this edition

UNESCO FORUM OF MINISTERS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES IN SOUTH ASIA REGION

SPFI CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP IN MUMBAI, INDIA

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON SOCIAL PROTECTION IN SRI LANKA

REBALANCING NECESSARY FOR SUBSTAINABLE GROWTH IN ASIA

ICSW SA REGIONAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN SRI LANKA

UNESCO Forum of Ministers of Social Protection Policies in South Asia Region

UNESCO works to create conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples based upon respect for community of shared values. UNESCO’s mission is to contribute to the building of peace, eradication of poverty through inter cultural dialogue. The regional Forum of Ministers in charge of Social Development was launched by UNESCO within the frame work of its Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme. The first forum in South Asia in Bhurban, Pakistan in 2006 focused on governance and public accountability. The second forum in 2008 in New Delhi India focused on transparency, right to information and social development. The third meeting of Ministers of Social Protection Policies in South Asia was held at Colombo Sri Lanka 20th-22nd February 2011.

This year International Council on Social Welfare, South Asia Regional committee was one of the supporters of this Forum. Representing ICSW were Mr Denys Correll, Global Executive Director, and Mr A.S. Shenoy Regional President for the South Asia Region. Our national representatives from Sri Lanka, Maldives and Afghanistan were delegates at the Forum. Mr Denys Correll chaired one session and Mr A.S. Shenoy was a panelist.
After detailed consultation and deliberations the *Colombo Declaration* was approved and signed by representatives of the governments of Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Nepal.

The *Colombo Declaration* recommended strengthening regional cooperation among South Asian countries, enriching the field of social protection and research by exchanging best practice on social protection policies and undertaking cross country studies, exposure visits, and joint projects.

Other major recommendations included a call to UN organisations and international donors to support South Asian countries in their efforts to expand public awareness, outreach and the scope of social protection initiatives. The Forum of Ministers of the South Asia Region agreed in the *Colombo Declaration* to:

1. Pledge to increase public funding to build the capacity of social sciences in the regions, through evidence based research analysis and statistics.

2. Commit to adopt a comprehensive approach to social protection.

3. Recognise the need for expanding the scope and benefits of social protection to most neglected and vulnerable sectors of the society including informal workers, migrants, persons with disabilities, the urban poor and other marginalised groups facing discrimination and exclusion.

4. Emphasis child – sensitive social protection initiatives and as an effective strategy to break the inter-generational cycle of poverty and reduce socio-economic disparities.

Social Welfare Ministers of South Asian Region and about 40 selected academicians, researchers and representatives of International agencies participated in this forum.

**SPFI CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP IN MUMBAI, INDIA**

A social protection floor initiative is the best tool by which benefits of economic growth percolate effectively to the most marginalised and vulnerable segments of the populations. For this “inclusive development” is required. India is looking forward for a target of 8.5 to 8.7% of GDP growth this year. Indian economy has become remarkably resilient to external and domestic shocks with recovery in agriculture, industry and services.
UNESCO FORUM OF MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FROM SOUTH ASIA

Social Protection Policies in South Asia

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