

Social Protection Strategy Off to Good Start

International labor standards are key component

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has taken initial steps to promote its Social Protection Strategy, aimed at reducing poverty by promoting efficient labor markets, reducing people's exposures to risk, and enhancing their ability to protect themselves against the consequences of unemployment and other losses of income.

"Overall, good progress has been made in implementing the social protection strategy in the initial year," states an ADB report to its Board of Directors.

Policymakers and the general public were educated on the new strategy and its role in ADB's objective of reducing poverty. Activities during the strategy's first year of implementation also included strengthening the organization's institutional capacity to manage social protection programs, building new partnerships with other international institutions, and solidifying ADB's working relationship with unions and nongovernment organizations. About 10% of all ADB lending currently goes to support social protection initiatives.

ADB's Social Protection Policy encompasses five key areas.

- *Labor market policies and programs, which promote employment, efficient operation of labor markets, and worker protection.* As a first step, ADB staff members are increasingly looking at these issues when conducting country poverty analyses and designing new programs.
- *Social insurance to cushion the risks associated with unemployment, poor*

health, disability, work-related injury, and old age. A proposed project in Tajikistan will help the Government develop more efficient and effective social safety nets, including better care for orphaned and abandoned children.

- *Assistance for single mothers, the homeless, the disabled, and other vulnerable groups.* ADB has approved a project to improve living conditions, provide access to education, and help find work for about 20,000 internally displaced people in Azerbaijan.
- *Micro- and area-based plans to help address problems and improve conditions in the informal sector and in rural communities.* An ADB project in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Viet Nam will help develop community-based HIV/AIDS prevention activities. In Nepal, a program will improve access to social protection services for farmers, including formally bonded agricultural workers.
- *Child protection measures.* An ADB project seeks to improve nutrition for mothers and children in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Labor Standards Key to Development

A key component of ADB's Social Protection Strategy is forging closer working relationships with international organizations and development partners to help strengthen ADB's initiatives. This process includes establishing formal partnerships,

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GOOD PROGRESS About 10% of all ADB lending currently goes to support social protection initiatives.

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holding joint workshops and seminars, and strengthening social dialogue with labor groups in the region.

ADB signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Labour Organization (ILO) earlier this year to maximize scarce resources and their development impact (*see box, p. 8*). The two organizations subsequently held a technical regional workshop on 18–19 September to discuss the role of labor standards in fostering broad-based development.

ADB complies with internationally recognized ILO core labor standards in designing and implementing its projects.

Akira Seki, then Director General of ADB's Regional and Sustainable Development Department, cited "overwhelming evidence that promoting decent working conditions reduces poverty, raises living standards, and enhances the quality of growth by increasing productivity." He told workshop participants that for these reasons, many countries and development agencies are supporting improved labor standards." Seki added that labor standards are "an integral part" of ADB's development mission.

The social protection strategy "commits us to respect internationally accepted labor standards and conform to good labor and social protection practices in all of our operations."

—ADB President Tadao Chino

Kunio Senga, Director General, ADB's Strategy and Policy Department, stressed that "promoting employment, adequate working conditions, investing in human capital, and reducing vulnerability of people at risk, is the best way to assist countries to develop their human potential, reduce poverty, and achieve sustainable growth."

On 21–25 October, ADB held a second workshop, organized with the ADB Institute and the Inter-American Development Bank, to strengthen the institutional capacity in developing countries in building and managing social protection systems. Participants discussed best practices from Latin America and Asia.

ADB also held a 2-day discussion with



Robert Vokey

IF I HAD THE CHANCE More than 1,000 young street artists in seven cities, including these boys from Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, were each given a piece of white paper, 48 crayons, and 24 pastels. Their mission? To send a message to the world about what they would do—if they had the chance. Although the art competitions, funded by ADB and organized with partner nongovernment organizations in each city are finished, the dream goes on.

Street Children Awarded Art Scholarships

ADB holds competition in seven cities

About 70 street children from seven cities in Asia and the Pacific won art scholarships from an art competition held by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) with the theme "If I Had the Chance."

The winners were among 1,000 child participants from Dhaka, Bangladesh; Jakarta, Indonesia; Kathmandu, Nepal; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea; and Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

In each city, about 150 children, from ages 5 to 16 years who are registered through local nongovernment organizations, took part in the art competition. A panel of judges selected the win-

ning drawings based on theme, originality, and artistic ability. The children also voted for their favorite drawings.

The region-wide art competition supports ADB's goal of poverty reduction by highlighting the potential, as well as the plight, of poor children.

ADB President Tadao Chino, who led the awards ceremony in Manila, said he was "moved not only by the richness of the children's artistic talents, but even more by the seriousness of their pursuit of a future built on their hopes and dreams."

ADB plans to publish selected winning entries, along with profiles of the young artists. ■

officials from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Asian and Pacific Regional Organization to strengthen the dialogue between organized labor and the international financial institutions. Representatives from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund also attended.

ADB President Tadao Chino told labor leaders and other participants at the 10–11 October meeting that the parties had "many areas of common interest: reducing poverty, promoting employment gen-

eration through economic growth, fostering human development, and improving the status of women in the Asia and Pacific region."

Mr. Chino stressed that the Social Protection Strategy "commits us to respect internationally accepted labor standards and conform to good labor and social protection practices in all of our operations." ■

For more information http://www.adb.org/Documents/Reports/Social_Protection/default.asp

ADB Holds Regional Meeting on Disability

Participants demand equal rights and equal access

People with disabilities must be visible and have a voice in decision making, concluded participants at a regional workshop on disability and development, sponsored by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Aside from social inclusion and participation, workshop participants proposed improved access to services and quality of life of people with disabilities.

Participants said governments, funding agencies, and other organizations should follow universal design guidelines to create enabling environments for people with disabilities and to ensure access to services. They also stressed that disabled people deserve the same rights and quality of services as other citizens.

The 3-day regional meeting, held on 2–4 October, brought together government officials and representatives from nongovernment organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, and organizations of the disabled to recommend ways to help the estimated 400 million people with disabilities in the Asia and Pacific region.

The number of people with disabilities in the region is growing. Disabilities are caused by inadequate occupational health and safety, poor prenatal care, lack of road and traffic management, civil con-

flicts, and land mines. In Cambodia alone, an estimated 15% of the population is disabled, many as a result of land mine accidents. In India, 50–60 million people—about 5% of the population—are disabled.

The disabled have a critical need to have access to services. Less than 5% of children with disabilities attend schools, and many adults with disabilities are either denied access to jobs or are discriminated against in the workplace.

“The disabled tend to be disadvantaged socially, economically, physically, and politically,” said Isabel Ortiz, ADB Senior Social Economist, Poverty Reduction and Social Development Division of the Regional and Sustainable Development Department (RSDD), who coordinated the workshop. “We aim to remove barriers to their freedom and enable them to participate fully in society. Supporting persons with disabilities is a priority from an economic and a human point of view.”

In his opening remarks at the regional workshop, Rolf S. Zelius, Chief Compliance Officer and Deputy Director General, RSDD, identified the root of the problem. “The identities and abilities of persons with disabilities have most often been overlooked and ignored.” He cited the need to enable persons with disabilities to be part

of the normal structure of society, providing them with access to the same privileges, resources, and opportunities.

During the workshop, participants representing governments, international organizations, disabled groups, and other social partners exchanged views. Hildegunn Olsen of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) office in Bangkok discussed the need for countries to develop strategies—including flexible curriculum development, teacher training, and community involvement—to ensure that children with disabilities have access to education.

“When moving toward more inclusive policies and practices,” she said, “the focus needs to be on strategies to remove barriers to learning and participation for all children.”

Venus Ilagan, Chairperson of Disabled Peoples’ International, stressed the need for “leveling the playing field so that disabled people can access jobs and transportation services, ensuring universal design, accessible technology, and coordinated public programs and services.”

Ms. Ilagan focused on the elements of a successful strategy to help persons with disabilities, including funding projects and activities that promote “the establishment of strong, democratic, and rights-based disability organizations” and support small projects that can be replicated or scaled-up in a broader and national scope.

Participants examined ADB case studies from Cambodia, India, Philippines, and Sri Lanka. For instance, a workshop in Sri Lanka was designed to educate members of the Employer’s Federation of Ceylon that people with disabilities are economically productive employees. Employers have since hired 60 people with disabilities.

In Cambodia, a project to organize a disability-led, rights-oriented institution has increased access to both employment and services, led to the drafting of a new disability legislation, and provided a greater voice for people with disabilities in policy development. ■



OPPORTUNITIES NEEDED Persons with disabilities need to be part of the normal structure of society and provided with access to the same privileges, resources, and opportunities.

PROGRAM EXEMPLIFIES ADB BEST PRACTICES

Reforming Mongolia's Social Security System

A program to strengthen the social security system in Mongolia is “an excellent example of an integrated, comprehensive social protection intervention,” states the Asian Development Bank (ADB)’s report to its Board of Directors on the Social Protection strategy.

Approved on 28 August 2001, the program marks ADB’s first major effort to help a member country reform its social security system. ADB provided two loans totaling US\$12 million for the Social Security Sector Development Program.

“Mongolia currently has a very extensive social security infrastructure, covering both its sedentary and nomadic populations,” Robert Schoellhammer, Economist in the Social Sectors Division, East and Central Asia Department told *NARO News*. “But in recent years, it has become increasingly unaffordable and ineffective in reducing poverty levels, which are currently static at about 36%. The challenge is to reform the existing system to make it more affordable, while safeguarding services for people who are unable to help themselves.”

The ADB-funded program is helping the Government of Mongolia improve services for the poorest, including the most vulnerable among the elderly, people with disabilities, children, and single-parent families. It is also helping to get the unemployed back into work. Schoellhammer points out that “with the achievement of democracy in this formerly Communist state, the environment in Mongolia is ripe for reform, heightening the opportunity for new initiatives to take hold and succeed.”

A key component of the program is the development of a social security master plan. This US\$600,000 technical assistance project is designed to help the Government create a 10-year policy framework for future activities. The master plan will address social welfare programs (such as nursing services and integration of people



Rollie del Rosario

NEW HOPE ADB will be helping Mongolia reform its social security system.

with disabilities), social assistance (including maternity and child benefits), and social insurance (including unemployment insurance and pensions). It will also help develop longer term strategies to reduce the estimated 17% unemployment rate.

“We expect the master plan to give the government leverage to coordinate the system and ensure that external assistance is compatible with the Government’s own priorities,” says Mr. Schoellhammer. “Once it is complete, we hope the Government will ask development agencies to work within its framework.”

ADB is collaborating with the World Bank and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) in designing the new policy framework. In addition, says Mr. Schoellhammer, ADB is drawing heavily on work done by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in pension reform as it moves to help design that component of the social security master plan. USAID has also done significant capacity building in the social insurance arena, and ADB hopes to build on that work as it moves forward.

Another component of the social protection program in Mongolia is to improve the targeting and delivery of services and benefits to concentrate limited resources on the very poorest. On the social welfare



Carolyn Dedolph

IMPROVED SERVICE Social welfare is key to developing nursing services for elderly people and creating a foster care system for children.

side, ADB is focusing on programs that move people out of institutions and into community-based settings. This means developing nursing services for elderly people and creating a foster care system for children. ADB is also helping Mongolia establish a cadre of social workers who will be able to spot problems such as child abuse and alcoholism early on and prevent the separation of children from their families in the first place.

Another component is intended to provide skills training and entrepreneurial development skills to unemployed adults. Practical vocational training will be provided in areas such as sewing, carpentry, horticulture, and meat processing. It will

also provide basic education in areas ranging from literacy and numeracy training to fundamental computer skills. Financed by the Nordic Development Fund, the US\$4 million component complements the Government’s overall effort to reduce poverty by providing jobs to the unemployed, while providing welfare resources to those incapable of working.

The final component of the social security project is a US\$1 million program, financed by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, to support people with disabilities in finding employment and to help integrate them into mainstream society. ■

See also <http://www.adb.org/Documents/News/2001/pi2001092.asp>



Ian Gill

OFF THE STREET Girls who are victims, or at risk of becoming victims, of sexual abuse and child prostitution in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, are being targeted through the project.

Getting Girls Off the Streets in Indonesia

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) cites achievements of a 2-year pilot project in Indonesia to rescue girls from life in the streets.

ADB hopes the project “will become a model for future efforts across the region to remove children from the streets and provide them with a safe place to live, an education, and skills training,” says Susanne Wendt, Social Development Specialist (Gender and Development), Social Sectors Division, Southeast Asia Department.

Launched in June 2001 in collaboration with Indonesia’s Department of Social Welfare, the project targets about 480 girls who are victims, or at risk of becoming victims, of sexual abuse and child prostitution in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

The project activities include a comprehensive support and counseling program; health and medical care, including pre- and post-natal care for pregnant girls and young mothers; rehabilitation services; and educa-

tion for young girls and vocational training for older girls. In addition, public and private sector social workers are being given specialized skills to help them effectively communicate and work with the street children.

Another important component of ADB’s project is a public information campaign to educate people about child sexual abuse. The project also includes workshops to sensitize workers on dealing with the issue of child sexual abuse, and a workshop on tools for disseminating information on the topic.

The project’s activities are being implemented by 11 nongovernment organizations (NGOs), with grant funding from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction. The Indonesian Government, NGOs, and private sector business supporters are working as partners to generate financial support to sustain the project beyond March 2003. ■

See also http://www.adb.org/Documents/Periodicals/ADB_Review/2001/vol33_1/street_girls.asp

Mekong Summit: Connecting Nations, Linking People

A first-ever Summit brought together Mekong leaders; resolutions made to work together to help the subregion prosper equitably

On 3 November 2002, the first-ever Summit of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) took place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, bringing together leaders of Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Lao People's Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. At the end of the Summit, the leaders signed a joint declaration, reaffirming their commitment to subregional cooperation and a shared vision of equal partnership in the pursuit of economic growth and greater prosperity.

This historic Summit gave new momentum to the Asian Development Bank

(ADB)'s GMS Economic Cooperation Program, which is celebrating its 10th year of promoting subregional cooperation. The Summit demonstrated the political commitment of the GMS leaders to cooperate for the growth and development of the subregion.

The leaders recognized the challenges of managing the subregion's natural environment and agreed to take responsibility and leadership for the sustainable management of national and shared resources. ADB President Tadao Chino shared their views. "Sound management of the environment is a prerequisite for, and not a con-

straint to, sustainable economic development," he said.

Mr. Chino pledged to broaden ADB's support of the GMS program, which began in 1992 with ADB's financial assistance. In a progress report delivered at the Summit, he said, "The Summit allows all of us to reaffirm our commitment to our shared vision of creating a prosperous and equitable subregion in the countries that share the Mekong River." ■

For more information, <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/Mekong/2002/summit.asp>



Samreth Socheat

SUMMIT LEADERS (left to right) ADB President Tadao Chino, Lao PDR Prime Minister Boun-Nhang Vorachith, PRC Premier of the State Council Zhu Rongji, Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen of Cambodia, Prime Minister Phan Van Khai of Viet Nam, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand, and Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council, Senior General Than Shwe of Myanmar.



Karti Sandilya, Resident Director, North American Representative Office of ADB, at the 57th Session of the UN General Assembly.

ADB Granted Observer Status at the United Nations General Assembly

On November 19, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was granted Observer Status at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. The Observer Status was granted through a vote formally approved at the 57th Session of the UN General Assembly.

Karti Sandilya, Resident Director, North American Representative Office of ADB, delivered a statement on behalf of

ADB President Tadao Chino, thanking “representatives of the People’s Republic of China for sponsoring this resolution, the delegations that co-sponsored the resolution, as well as the members of the Sixth Committee, which recommended its adoption.”

The resolution underlines ADB’s belief that strengthened cooperation between the UN and ADB will greatly benefit its endeavors. ■

New Publications

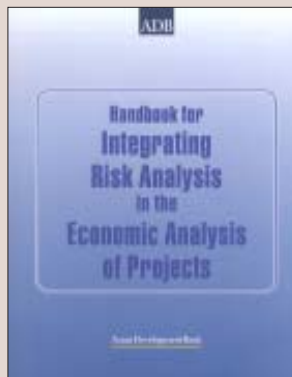
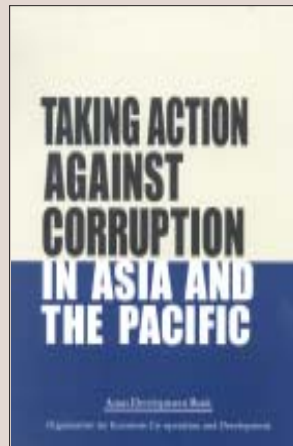
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Appendix II presents the endorsement of the Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Asia-Pacific by 17 countries from the region, clearly reflecting the growing trend to take concrete action against corruption in the region.



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ADB, ILO to Collaborate on Labor Component of ADB's Work

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Labour Organization (ILO) earlier this year to strengthen the labor component of ADB's work and to maximize scarce resources and their development impact.

Under the MOU, signed 9 May in Shanghai, ILO will provide technical assistance to ensure that ADB country strategies include a strong labor and social protection component and work with the organization to strengthen its dialogue with labor unions and other social partners.

Specifically, ADB and ILO will implement the following.

- Exchange documentation, studies, research, and best practices to promote cooperation and harmonization in their operations.
- Hold consultations on ADB country strategies and assistance plans. ILO technical staff will offer advice and labor market assessments on some ADB country poverty analyses, country strategies, and pro-

gram preparatory missions to ensure that ADB's work supports inclusive, job-creating development patterns and enhances the welfare of workers in the region.

- Consult on project design. ILO will assist in project design and review missions through an inter-agency consultation process.
- Improve social dialogue. ILO will facilitate ADB's participation in developing a cooperative framework among counterpart ministries, business groups, workers' organizations, civil society partners, and development institutions in countries where ADB plans a social protection intervention.

In addition, ILO will help implement ADB-funded lending and nonlending activities relating to its competence and capacity, such as regional, advisory, and project preparatory technical assistance.

See also <http://www.adb.org/Documents/News/2002/nr2002079.asp>

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NEWS FROM

NARO

The quarterly newsletter of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) North American Representative Office (NARO) aims to enhance communications between ADB and its client groups in North America. Articles in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official ADB view. We welcome readers' comments and suggestions.

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