

**Costing Social Protection Floor Coverage Gaps: Methodology and First
Results Workshop**

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By Mr. Jiyuan Wang

Director of ILO Country Office-Bangkok

**Khun Suparoek Hongpakdee, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of
Social Development and Human Security**

Distinguished participants,

On behalf of the United Nations in Thailand, I am honoured to welcome you in the Costing Social Protection Floor Coverage Gaps: Methodology and First Results Workshop. I also wish to express my very sincere gratitude to each and every one of you, distinguished experts from all walks of life, in-line ministries, social security institutions, social partners, civil society organization, United Nations agencies. Thank you very much for coming and participating in this workshop. I understand that many of you are very occupied due to the recent catastrophic crisis, and I appreciate your time and efforts.

We participate here in this workshop, because we have a shared concern: how to ensure that every Thai citizen benefit from a minimum of guarantees enabling to make a decent living?

Social Protection Floor is defined as a set of social security transfers and access to essential services through adoption of a comprehensive, integrated and coordinated approach of social protection policies. Over the past years, Thailand strongly asserted its commitment to implement an inclusive social protection so as to equitably distribute the benefits of the remarkable economic growth experienced during the past decades. There are plenty of examples of this commitment. Among them are the Universal Coverage Scheme providing health care to all citizens, the Universal tax-financed scheme guaranteeing a minimum income to every people over 60 years of age, and the 15 year free education for all program.

However, despite this significant development, all Thai citizens still do not effectively benefit from basic adequate social protection, and the coverage of the informal sector remains low.

The Royal Thai Government asserted its willingness to overcome these challenges and have recognised social protection as a theme of the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan. Its effort concentrate on developing a universal coherent social protection system so as to mitigate social inequalities and provide lifetime protection for all.

We strongly encourage and support this initiative and acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, responsible for coordinating implementation.

According to the Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalisation Report which was launched in early November this year, it has confirmed that the implementation of Social Protection Floors can make a substantial contribution to consolidating and achieving development gains. Fulfilment of an adequate social protection floor would significantly contribute to poverty alleviation in Thailand. Especially, during the time of catastrophic crisis in which Thailand has experienced, social protection floor would remarkably support the people to become self-sufficient and able to cope with the difficulties they are facing effectively. More than a safety net, it gives people a hand up, not a hand out, and is considered as a pillar of a development strategy.

Based on an assessment study conducted by the UN Country Team on Social Protection, we have done some costing exercises. These exercises translated the recommendations, which emerged from the August 10th Social Protection Assessment workshop, into specific social protection provisions that need to be introduced or further expanded in Thailand, in order to guarantee at least a comprehensive social protection floor for all the population. We have estimated the cost of these social protection provisions and simulated the cost over a ten years period and related these cost projections to the projections of the government budget.

Today, our objective of this workshop is to share the costing methodology, the assumptions and the results of the costing, and to confirm the relevance of the proposed social protection provisions. I am certain that the result of your discussion will be helpful in prioritising between possible Social Protection policy options in the context of long term social protection development and short term disaster management, and at last serve as a basis for discussion on the fiscal space and Government's budget reallocations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your participation and your strong commitment towards developing the national social protection system. I also wish to thank my UN colleagues for their hard work and their continue effort in supporting the Thai government in establishing the social protection floor. I wish you great success in your deliberations today and look forward the key policy recommendations from this workshop that will support Thailand towards the achievement of the expansion of social protection to reach a just society.