

Updates on AEPF campaign on transformative social protection

Friday 25 September 2009, by [dela CRUZ-CARDENAS Maris](#) (Date first published: 9 September 2009).

Dear Pierre,

Warmest wishes! As you know, we are embarking on a regional campaign on social protection as a democratic and human rights response to the crisis. This campaign began to take shape after the caucus of representatives of urban poor movements at AEPF-7 in Beijing.

We believe that this social protection initiative is a transformative one. Aside from asserting the people's right to live with dignity - in particular, this is pursuing the rights to employment, food, and access to essential services particularly health, housing, water, education and electricity - the campaign also addresses the concerns on equity, empowerment, and solidarity.

The campaign on transformative social protection sees a world where there is respect for the dignity of life, where people's well-being is the priority of state and non-state actors (business, labour, civil society), and where people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives and their environment. It prods the people especially the poor and marginalised to take up the claim to their right to social protection. More than the quantifiable achievements, the campaign also aims to help strengthen social movements and help the poor realise their collective economic and political strength. From concrete gains, the poor would shake off their sense of helplessness, boost their psychological and actual power (confidence, and electoral votes and government seats), and become active agents of social change. This is seen to break patronage politics in some countries as well. Attached is the campaign concept.

We would like to share with you now some developments in the campaign. We are happy that it has been moving forward although we are still looking for other support for this campaign. Below are some updates:

1. Southeast Asia Meeting on Social Protection (October 12-13, 2009, Manila, Philippines)

The main objective is to be able to draft an initial Southeast Asia People's Agenda that we can hopefully bring or raise on the occasion of the ASEAN Summit this October. About 25-30 participants, coming from Southeast Asia networks (Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and probably from Cambodia too), shall be invited to this meeting.

2. Meeting with Progressive Parliamentarians (November 2009, Malaysia)

The agenda that will be formulated at the southeast asia meeting on social protection will also be presented and discussed at the meeting of some progressive parliamentarians in November, in cooperation with FES.

3. Updates on national efforts

Discussions among some members of civil society groups at the country-level have already begun

while in the Philippines, the campaign is already quite advance:

a. Indonesia - a working group with initial members of four key organizations was already formed and is preparing for a workshop in Indonesia to discuss the social protection campaign and start developing agenda on this. Some of them have also begun initial studies on social protection.

b. Thailand - an exploratory meeting with some of the civil groups and people's organizations was also conducted in February. A new network on social protection in Thailand was also tapped through Action Aid. This is the Bangkok Development Forum that conducted a seminar in May on development issues including social protection.

c. Vietnam - two key networks there have already been undertaking series of activities on social protection. The most recent was the South-South Youth Solidarity Exchange organized by Action Aid and Vietnam People's Development Foundation.

d. Philippines - more than 100 (and counting) urban poor groups are joining the campaign on social protection, under the formation Kilos Maralita (Movement for Social Protection of the Poor) and have already developed a social protection package addressed to the government. In fact, there is a heightening campaign in the Philippines now. More sectors (labor, women, religious, and parliamentarians) are coming together in this campaign.

Below is a photo of the urban poor march to Mendiola near Malacanang Palace in the Philippines (where the President holds office) last August 31. Hundreds of urban poor joined the march and picket to assert their right to life with dignity, and towards this, the fulfillment of their right to social protection. Specifically, this means security in housing and land tenure instead of demolition of their houses. This is just one of the urban poor's demand in relation to their call for social protection of the poor and the vulnerable in this period of crisis.

4. We just finished a draft manifesto for the campaign – “Reclaim People's Dignity.”

5. We will soon be creating a mailing list for the campaign network on social protection to share discussions and materials on the campaign. Below is the initial list of our major networks (resource persons, advisers, and/or partners in the campaign) on social protection:

- * Koen de Feyter, University of Antwerp, Belgium
- * Pierre Rousset, Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières (ESSF), France
- * Johannes Dragsbaek Schmidt, Aalborg University, Denmark
- * Sally Rousset, Développement et Civilisations Lebret-Irfed, France
- * Tove Selin, Finnish AEPF Committee, Finland
- * Francisco Nemenzo, former President of the University of the Philippines
- * V.Francis Mesina, Kilos Maralita (Movement for Social Protection of the Poor), Philippines
- * Sandeep Chachra, ActionAid, India
- * Anuradha Chenoy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Indian
- * Willy Dcosta, Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)
- * Upendranadh Choragudi, Institute for Human Development-Social Protection Asia, India
- * Charles Santiago, Member of Parliament, and Monitoring Sustainability of Globalisation (Malaysia)
- * Djuni Thamrin, Indonesian Partnerships for Local Governance Initiatives (IPGI), Indonesia
- * Rafendi Djamin, Human Rights Working Group, Indonesia
- * Wahyu Susilo, International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development, Indonesia
- * Bonnie Setiawan, Institute for Global Justice, Indonesia
- * Tran Dac Loi, Vietnam Peace and Development Foundation (VPDF)
- * Hoang Phuong Thao, Action Aid International

- * Junya (Lek) Yimpraser, Thai Labor Campaign (Thailand)
- * Swee Seng Yap, FORUM-Asia, Thailand
- * Subodh Raj Pyakurel, Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), Nepal
- * Manfred Bienefeld, Carleton University Ottawa, Canada

Thank you so much.
Maris

P.S.

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