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DAC Network on Poverty Reduction

POVNET PROGRAMME OF WORK 2011-12

GLOBAL SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOOR

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WORK PROGRAMME ON SOCIAL PROTECTION

POVNET 2011-2012

1. The OECD DAC Network on Poverty Reduction (POVNET) is focusing on a number of issues in relation to social protection in its 2011-2012 work programme. Below each issue is described followed by the proposed POVNET deliverable explaining how the network intends to address the given issue.

Sharing Best Practice and Experience on Implementing and Building Capacity for Social Protection

2. A growing evidence base on the impact of social protection programmes in many middle and some low-income developing countries has led to an increased recognition on the part of governments and many donors of the role of social protection in low-income countries in support of productive employment and pro-poor growth as well as in directly tackling poverty, improving the take-up of public services and stimulating growth in the livelihoods of poor people. An increasing number of bilateral donors are seeking to include support to social protection policies, programmes and measures in their country programmes.

3. Knowledge and practical experience at both country level and in donor headquarters on how to design and implement social protection programmes is variable and sometimes weak. Some donors have extensive experience from specific social protection projects, from social protection components in broader integrated programmes, or from the use of employment and social protection measures in emergency and post-conflict interventions, while others, in a given country context, may be relative newcomers to the issues.

4. Social protection is also one of the key areas of the growing South-South cooperation, and important lessons can be learned from the experiences of the new emerging donors. Several regional cooperation bodies (e.g. AU, ASEAN, EAC, SADC) are also working towards greater regional coordination and harmonisation of social protection policies and instruments.

5. There is a need to bring together all this experience and to promote and facilitate the sharing of good practice among donors of what works in different kinds of country contexts so that all partners can learn from each other. It is facilitating exchanges on this “how to” aspect of supporting social protection that POVNET wants to address.

6. As a joint forum of bilateral aid agencies POVNET is particularly keen to make sure that its Social Protection Task Team will provide an easy ‘low threshold’ entry into social protection related work for those bilateral donor agencies who are less experienced but interested in promoting social protection through their development cooperation. This is an objective that POVNET shares with the European Union, whose recent development policy ‘flagship’ report European Report on Development – on the topic of “Social Protection for Inclusive Development in Africa” – argued as follows:

“An EU-wide “social protection and development” network of experts (from development ministries and agencies, labour and social affairs ministries, civil society) should be established, bearing in mind that complementarity with OECD-POVNET is essential.”

7. POVNET should also take a constructive approach to promote such complementarity, synergy and coordination with the EU and other partners, particularly in Africa. Therefore, when feasible, the work

plans, events and information sharing processes of the POVNET, EU, AU, ASEAN, UN, ILO, WB and other networks of social protection experts should be well coordinated to achieve maximum synergies. Many development agencies, multilateral and bilateral, academic and other institutions, provide training and capacity building on social protection, and have developed a significant resource base and training capacity. This capacity, however, is not easily accessible for the low-income countries and the donors who are less experienced in social protection. The training available is often at international or regional level and not usually tailored to the particular context or priorities of a given country. Country level capacity building will need to be tailored to the country-specific needs in low-income and in donor countries. POVNET can help to facilitate the matching of various training needs and resources while also helping to avoid a multiplicity of approaches to social protection and build coordinated approaches and joint programmes.

How POVNET will address this:

8. POVNET will establish a forum for donors working on social protection to share experience, best practices and resources on issues related to initiating and rolling out social protection at field level. This will partly take place during POVNET Task Team meetings, but also on an ongoing basis via a web-based platform that POVNET will establish on which DAC donors (both HQ and field staff) can discuss and share information on country level efforts. The platform will also provide a more open forum in which social protection experts (researchers, academics, and policy makers) can share the latest information, research and impact of social protection programmes, and thus push the frontiers of social protection by advancing the current debate, advocating for increased government and donor investments into the build-up of comprehensive and permanent national social protection systems, and promoting – as a first priority – a minimum level of protection for all residents (in light of a recently launched rights-based approach of the UN Global Social Protection Floor Initiative).

9. To respond to the issue of capacity and training, POVNET will support the creation of a bottom-up approach to building training and capacity programmes in collaboration with other donors (Train4Dev, EU, UN, ILO, and WB) that will be useful for both donors and partner countries. This work will include collaborating closely with partner countries and southern institutions involved in social protection research, implementation and extension, and through this partnership develop new joint approaches to training and capacity development in the field.

Measuring and Monitoring Aid for Social Protection

10. There is currently neither reliable data on ODA spending on social protection, nor any agreed definition of social protection. However, there are clear and shared views on the objectives underlying social protection, such as efforts towards preventing, mitigating and/or coping with natural and man-made risks and precarious situations, and tackling threats to human security on which poor people's livelihoods are highly vulnerable. An agreed selection of purpose codes would facilitate monitoring, improve comparability of efforts and support greater harmonization across donors, and raise the profile of their efforts to strengthen social protection. Challenges arise from the fact that different donors have different 'definitions' of social protection and thus systems based on those definitions. The POVNET Secretariat and the statistical division of the Development Directorate of the OECD are well placed to support this important work, which has been called for by many players in the field (e.g. UN institutions, the development banks, bilateral donors, international NGOs and researchers).

How POVNET will address this:

11. In collaboration with the statistical division of the OECD, POVNET will address this diagnostic problem by setting out to develop a CRS funding code for all donors to employ. To some extent this also

implies agreeing on a shared definition of social protection, although focus will be on measurement of ODA for social protection rather than developing a finite definition. Some DAC-donors currently record the social protection related components of their agriculture, health or other sector interventions by recording a certain percentage share of those interventions into the CRS code for social welfare services. The viability of this approach will also be discussed in the POVNET Social Protection Task Team, and a joint harmonized approach will be promoted.

Organisation of the Work

12. POVNET will establish a Task Team to undertake this work. The Task Team will be made up of relevant thematic specialists on Social Protection from DAC members, multilateral donors, developing country partners and NGOs. POVNET will convene its first meeting on March 16th in Geneva. The Task Team will consider what added value POVNET can bring to the existing global social protection initiatives and how it will monitor and measure its impact. The current work programme will be the main discussion item of the first meeting.

13. Over the next two years the POVNET Secretariat will provide organisational support, assistance with preparation of issue briefs, coordination and backstopping, whilst participating Task Team members will be asked to provide input to the discussions, liaise within their agencies (in relation to getting feedback from colleagues in the field and in the HQs training and capacity building, and statistics) and share information with participating members.