



China Hosts South-South Forum on Social Protection

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Around 250 policymakers from 75 countries are gathering in Beijing for the 2015 South-South Learning Forum on "Emerging Social Protection Systems in an Urbanizing World". The week-long Forum, which was officially opened today by Chinese State Counselor Wang Yong and World Bank Group Vice President Keith Hansen, is a landmark, pioneering event to discuss, share and learn from emerging knowledge and practical innovations on social protection in urban areas. Urbanization poses both opportunities and challenges for central and local governments around the globe. China embodies a perfect location to learn from the design and implementation of comprehensive social protection systems for urban dwellers, especially from the experience of its Dibao urban social safety nets program. As the largest developing country with 1.3 billion people, China has developed a social protection system tailored to our specific conditions and focused on results. This system is based on minimum living guarantee, support for the extremely poor, assistance for people affected by disaster, medical assistance, education assistance, housing, employment and temporary assistance, complemented by participation of social forces. This has formed a huge, solid and effective social safety net covering over 70 million poor people," says Li Liguo, Chinese Minister of Civil Affairs. "This forum will provide a platform to share experience and expand multilateral dialogue. I am confident that it will help countries take more effective actions and contribute to the development of country-tailored and sustainable social protection policies and systems to guarantee and improve the basic living standards for the people in developing countries," he adds. Around 54 percent of the worlds population now lives in urban areas. Every single day, more than 180,000 people urbanize globally. Simply put, much of our future depends on whether cities thrive or sink. This event aims to share our collective knowledge on how to operationalize safety nets in urban settings. We also stand to gain from Chinas stellar experience in bringing more than 600 million people out of poverty over three decades and the experience with its urban social safety nets program -the Dibao," says Keith Hansen, World Bank Groups Vice President for Human Development. "With poverty reduction as the primary goal, a strong and diversified financing mechanism for the development of the social protection system is the only way to common development, as well as the obligation of public finance," said Yu Weiping, Vice Minister of Finance of China. "Under the New Normal of slower economic growth and accelerating urbanization, Chinas Ministry of Finance will, based on our national conditions, continue to learn from international experience, do our best to ensure financing for social protection, and improve funding efficiency and effectiveness. We will work with other developing countries and international organizations to achieve our vision of eradicating poverty and common development." The event is co-hosted by the World Bank Group and the Government of China, particularly through the support of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, Ministry of Finance of the Peoples Republic of China, and Beijing Municipal Government. The Forum was also made possible through the financial support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, as well as the RSR (Rapid Social Response) Program which in turn is supported by the Russian Federation, Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom and Australia. The Forums agenda is designed to promote knowledge sharing through a range of learning methods: on one hand, plenary presentations will explore issues around urban institutional and financing arrangements, operational issues, and ways to connect social safety nets to urban labor markets, basic social services, and urban development agendas. Ministers, government officials and practitioners from five continents will participate actively throughout the event. Participants will also have the opportunity to engage and learn from each other during interactive roundtable discussions, including allowing to build networks for continued collaboration beyond the Forum. Structured lessons-learned sessions towards the end of the Forum will give participants the opportunity to reflect on the weeks content and discuss ideas and priorities. In addition to that, the event also includes a one-day field trip visit to various locations in Beijing Municipality to witness Chinas urban Dibao and other social assistance programs in action. Media Contacts
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