Revitalizing Rural Livelihood and Wellbeing

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• The current problems of today’s rural areas in many Asian countries live characterized by low/no cash income, bad crops, land grabbing and mining, poor crops, no saving, natural disasters, climate changes, etc. These have affected the livelihood of farmers and the poor is hit hardest, crisis.

• Despite its large contribution to GDP growth, agriculture remains not a favorable business to live. Agriculture is a disadvantaged sector, and certainly not a good business for investment. The situation has again affected people’s livelihood and wellbeing.

• We may miss the poorest of the poor who has been left behind as they cannot outmigrate to escape poverty. It is because they lack of social capital, assets nance and information to migrate. Even now the poverty rate is getting lower and lower in many countries, the poorest of the poor is not improved.

• In addition to the poor and the poorest, we should pay attention to the most vulnerable groups such as single mother, the aged, poor women and children, the indigenous people, etc who are not protected and under deep poverty. Are they hidden or forgotten?

• Subjective well-being (SWB) is a concept lacking of fair justice, social self-esteem and social inclusion. We should have and show the data on the difference between SWB and happiness of the poor and the non-poor to understand their situation and prospects.

• Poverty is multi-dimensional today. It is not of single dimension as income poverty (1-2 USD per day measurement). We should take into consideration other important aspects of basic social services (health care, schooling, sanitation, information, legal services, etc) which are lacking for the poor. Enhancing knowledge and capacity building should be holistic, not only income. It requires multi-stakeholders and new approach to address social inequality.

• The current approach using needs assessment and problem solving may not be relevant for rural people today. The people know what they can do for themselves and they need good leadership and technical assistance (such as the Barefoot College in India) to develop and change their life.

• Given the increasing climate and man-made disasters, as well as political uncertainties, people will need capacity training in risk management and risk reduction for resilient livelihood. Moreover, social protection and local-level measures need to be strengthened and targeted effectively.

• Inclusive policy to reduce marginalization and ensure no one left behind during the process of development.

• Good and on-time research assessment are needed to provide facts and evidence for policy intervention and change.