

Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP)
Green Graduation Programme
Progress report of May 2023

4.1.1 Arrange workshop/meeting with policy execution level concerned stakeholders for strengthening social safety net for the urban extreme poor families increasing budget allocation and inclusion

Preparatory meeting with CBO leaders:

On 24 May 2023 CUP arranged a preparatory meeting with the CBO leaders. The purposes of the meeting were to discuss about the programme and their role and responsibilities of the programme, to prepare a memorandum to submit to the chief guest. Also, the situation of the getting social safety net services of the urban poor. Total 10 participants actively participate in the meeting including CBO leaders, SHG leaders, concept note writer & CUP staffs.



National Level Dialogue on " Urban poverty reduction: Allocation and increasing budget for social safety net services "



On 28 May 2023 Coalition for the Urban Poor (CUP) organized the National Level Dialogue titled “Urban Poverty Reduction: Budget Allocation and Increase in the Social Safety Net Services” under Green Graduation programme at the VIP Lounge of the National Press Club. Total 112 participants attended in the event among of them 35 participants from electronic and print media, 30 Participants from NGOs, Academician, researchers and 35 Participants from CBOs and slums peoples, 4 participants of Government officials of SB, NSI. The current government is implementing many successful programs for poverty alleviation and socio-economic development, most of which are village-centric. The social protection services that exist in the city are very few and non-mainstream. Without poverty alleviation of the urban ultra-poor population, the implementation of the Bangladesh government's global commitment (leaving no one behind) and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals are not possible. Specific plans for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation of the urban poor and budget allocation and budget increase in the social security service sector are required.

In the dialogue, the representatives of various civil society organizations, CBOs, Academician, Human rights defenders, Activists, Self-help group, Labor Rights Activist and researchers have demanded the preparation of an accurate list of the urban poor for the proper implementation of the social safety net program. They said that currently there is no list of poor, widows and disabled in different wards of North and South City Corporation of Dhaka. Many are deprived of state facilities due to lack of genuine list. In addition to public officials, representatives of civil society, local slum dwellers and workers should be included in this list. Speakers called for adequate allocation for the development of poor people in the national budget.

The Vice Chairperson of the CUP Mr. Md. Mahbulul Haque presided over the organized dialogue. The executive director of the CUP, Ms. Khondaker Rebaka Sun-Yat, moderated the event. The prominent economist and former Chairman of the Department of Economic of the Dhaka University Professor MM Akash participated as chief discussant, the Chief executive of the Centre for Policy Research and Development (CPRD) and researcher Md. Shamsuddoha, General Secretary of the Democratic Budget Movement Mr. Monoar Mostofa, Business editor of SA TV Mr. Salauddin Bablu, Labor Rights Activist Mr. Abul Hossain, President of BOSC- Slum Rights Protection Committee Ms Hosneara Begum Rafeja; they participated in the discussion as discussants. Concern Worldwide's Country Director Mr. Manish Kumar Agrawal, On behalf of Director General; Additional Director of Social Services Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare Ms. Shamsun Nahar, Deputy Director of Women Affairs Department Ms. Fatema Johura participated as Special guest in the event.



Development researcher Mr. Aminur Rasul Babul presented the concept paper in the dialogue. In the concept paper he said that the scope and budget of social protection programs for poverty alleviation in the city should be increased and ward and region wise budgets should be developed in the city. A separate study should be done on urban poverty. Social protection program should be formulated considering the results and context of that study. At the same time, urban policies should be approved on an urgent basis and strategies and institutional arrangements should be developed for the urban poor according to those policies. The concept paper also states that political commitment is necessary for the effective implementation of sustainable development programs. The demand also states that separate programs should be undertaken for the urban poor if necessary to reduce the rate of extreme poverty and poverty. Especially urban poor girls, boys and women should be included in skill development programs on a priority basis. Widow allowance should be ensured for urban poor under social security programme. Government should ensure increased sector and allocation as per need in social protection sector for urban poor. Birth-registration, national identity card should be provided to the urban ultra-poor. Above all, employment must be created at the local level to reduce urban poverty.

The following 9 demands are presented in the concept paper:

1. Urban poverty alleviation should increase the scope and budget of social protection programs and develop ward/region wise urban budgets. I want to see its reflection in the upcoming budget.
2. A separate study should be done on urban poverty. Social protection programs need to be designed taking into account the research findings and context. In this case, such social protection programs can be education, health, employment creation etc. In that case the type of allocation and implementation may also be different.

3. Urgently approve urban policies and develop strategies and institutional arrangements for the urban poor in accordance with the policies.
4. Political commitment is essential for the effective implementation of sustainable development programs involving everyone in the collective commitment and efforts of all quarters. To reduce the rate of extreme poverty and poverty, separate programs for the urban poor should be undertaken and skill development programs should be included on a priority basis especially for the urban extreme poor girls, boys and women.
5. Widow allowance should be ensured for urban poor under social security programme.
6. Government should ensure increased sector and allocation as per need in social protection sector for urban poor.
7. The urban ultra-poor (dwellers and slum dwellers) must be ensured birth registration, national identity cards and be included in social protection programs on a priority basis, otherwise genuine poverty eradication will not be possible.
8. Urban poverty can be greatly reduced if employment is to be created at the local level. The urban poor is unemployment and consequential shocks at the local level.
9. Transparency, accountability and good governance should be ensured in the implementation of social security programs and should be mainstreamed in urban social security services.

Discussion points of Discussants:

In the dialogue, Professor MM Akash said, our first demand should be – citizenship recognition. Then list of the poor will be developed by the state. The government needs to implement the national budget in a non-discriminatory manner. 40 percent of the poor people's fate is held by the rich 10 percent of the country. Because this 40 percent of the people's budget allocation takes half of the rich class. It is not possible to change the fate of the poor with the other half. Therefore, political will is needed first to stop looting. He urged the government to take into account the interests of poor people in budget formulation.



Researcher Shamsuddoha said that the number of poor people in cities and villages is increasing. People are moving to cities for jobs in unique sectors including the national service sector. Income inequality is

first recognized when rural people come to the city. But these poor people work and keep the economy of Dhaka City running. But the government is not paying them. They have to tax those who are enjoying more than the benefit of the state of their assessment. The money collected should be distributed among the poor who keep the economy running.

In the dialogue, SA TV Business Editor Salahuddin Bablu said that if the budget is big, the poor will increase. So the big budget should be stopped. Because the money in the budget goes to the pockets of rich people. Inflation will increase if looting and corruption are not reduced. More strict measures should be taken to stop corruption and looting. TCB demanded to increase the use of technology in product distribution.

General Secretary of the Democratic Budget Movement Mr. Monoar Mostofa (National & International Researcher) leave the programme before his speech for his another important programme of his organization but he agreed for solidarity of the dialogue of this issues and also incorporate the issues of urban poverty and social safety net in their continuous activities of Democratic Budget Movement.

Labor rights Activist Mr. Abul Hossain demand to the government for allocate the budget for housing and social safety net for Urban Poor because it is their constitutional rights. He thanks CWW and CUP to arrange the effective and important dialogue. He also advice the CBO Leaders to be organized and raise their voice untidily and continuously in different ways.

President of BOSC Ms Hosnara begum Rafeja raised the rights of urban poor. She said that all urban poor including pavement dwellers are the citizen of Bangladesh. So, they have the rights to access the all kinds of services for poor including social safety net services of the government but the government discriminated the urban poor people. On behalf of Urban Poor she strongly demands to government for allocation the social services including child education and increase the budget of social safety net program of urban poor.

Discussion points of especial guest:

Additional Director of Social Services Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare Ms. Shamsun Nahar shared the social safety net services under Social Services Department. She also shared the social safety net services in urban areas and agreed for increasing more services and budget for the social safety net programme for urban poor. She agreed for any kind of support to CUP and urban poor people for ensure access the social safety net services under Social Services Department

Deputy Director of Women Affairs Department Ms. Fatema Johura thanks to CUP for invitation of this important dialogue. This is an rich and effective dialogue and express that she enrich more from the discussion and agreed for increase and allocate safety net services urban poor especially women and children. She also shares their services for women, children and youth in Dhaka city under the district office of Department of Women Affairs.

Concern Worldwide Country director Manish Kumar Agrawal said, we are living at risk of climate change. Those who are poorer are more at risk. So, everyone should work together to alleviate poverty. The country director also share the CWW objectives and priorities the extreme poor population like as urban

poor. In this meeting express his opinion it is a good combination of participant like as expertise, discussant, civil society representatives, journalist and poor representatives are join this meetings from different areas and they actively participate the dialogue and raise their voice. The government is working on this. He expressed hope that it will be reflected in the next national budget as well.



Output/ Outcome:

- 1) Mass awareness creating among the media, CSOs, CBOs, Policy Makers and Government officials has improved.
- 2) The government officials agreed to work for increasing the budget for the social safety net programme of urban poor.
- 3) More than 112 participants attended in the events from the representatives of Government officials, Academicians, Activists, journalists and target groups.
- 4) Discussants have expressed their solidarity with the movement of the target agenda.
- 5) Memorandum from urban poor has developed for the submission to the PSC, due to absence of chief guest, CUP preserved the memorandum and it will be submit to chairman of the parliamentary standing committee of the Ministry of Social Welfare.
- 6) 4 to 5 Extreme urban poor representatives including Self-help group leaders has raised their voices demand their rights of social safety net services as a vulnerable people of Bangladesh.
- 7) More than 20 electronic and print media are published the issues. Especially SA TV, ETV broadcast the programme in their news in several time and installation in the youtube.

News link:

<https://www.kalerkantho.com/online/national/2023/05/28/1284301>
<https://www.bhorerkagoj.com/2023/05/28/%E0%A6%A8%E0%A6%97%E0%A6%B0-%E0%A6%A6%E0%A6%B0%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%A6%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%B0%E0%A6%A6%E0%A7%87%E0%A6%B0-%E0%A6%B8%E0%A6%A0%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%95-%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%B2%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%95/>
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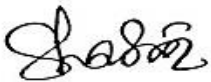
4.1.4 Meeting with local level SSN service provider (UCD) to ensure the services for extreme urban poor

Due to the unavailability of the social service officer the programme has been shifted to the month of June 2023.

Regular communication with CWW project coordinator and others

CUP management and programme officer regularly communicate with the CWW project focal person and others for update and necessary support.

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