Opening Remarks

The 2005 PEP Network Meeting: Aiming for Country-Specific Responses to Poverty[*]

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Good morning, on behalf of the PEP network, I would like to welcome all of you to the fourth meeting of the PEP network. We are very happy to be here in Colombo, thanks to our host, the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) of Sri Lanka headed by Dr. Kelegama. The IPS conference organizing team lead by Miss Ganga Tilakaratna has so efficiently organized the meeting. Our thanks also go to the IDRC for providing continued support to build research capacities in developing countries.

This week-long meeting brings together about 150 researchers, experts, practitioners and policymakers from about 40 countries. Held annually, the meeting provides opportunities for researchers to share research results with other researchers and stakeholders. It also serves as an occasion for some researchers to present new research proposals for consideration by the network.

The Poverty and Economic Policy network or PEP network aims to assist in building research capacity in developing countries that would lead to better policies and programmes and consequently reduce poverty.

PEP consists of three sub-networks, namely, the Poverty Monitoring, Measurement and Analysis (PMMA) network, the Modeling and Policy Impact Analysis (MPIA) network and the Community-Based Monitoring System (CBMS) network. Dr. Jean-Yves Duclos heads the PMMA network, Dr. Bernard Decaluwe heads the MPIA network, and yours truly heads the CBMS network.

In this meeting, the researchers from the PMMA network will showcase the researches they have done in developing tools and applying these to monitor, measure and analyse a wide range of poverty issues. On the other hand, researchers from the MPIA network would be presenting their work on the economy-wide models and using these models to draw the links between specific micro economic policies and shocks and the impact on poverty. CBMS researchers, meanwhile, would present the findings of the different dimensions of poverty from the community-based monitoring system and share how the data are being used to promote evidence-based policymaking in the various localities in 12 countries where the CBMS is being implemented. The CBMS network is promoting the use of CBMS tools to improve local governance, promote transparency and public accountability, and monitor poverty at the local level and facilitate targeting of poverty reduction programmes.

In addition to these presentations, we will have a session on the impact of last year's tsunami on poverty. The recent tsunami has affected several countries in the region and unfortunately, our host for this year, Sri Lanka, has been the hardest hit. We hope that from all these presentations, we will have a better understanding of poverty and its various dimensions.

This will enable network members working together with the development communities to formulate more country-specific responses to the poverty problems that we are facing in our countries. Only then will we be able to achieve the millennium development goals of halving extreme poverty by 2015. So on that note, welcome again to this fourth PEP annual meeting.