

South Asia Features 11 Cases in Global Learning Process for Poverty Reduction Conference

Beijing, March 23 2004 - The World Bank and the Government of China announced today the global learning process leading up to a conference about poverty reduction to be held next May in China. The South Asia Region will feature 11 case studies at the Shanghai poverty conference, aimed at sharing knowledge and learning from both successful and less successful attempts to reduce poverty in all its dimensions.

The World Bank, in partnership with other multilateral and bilateral donors, is sponsoring the conference, with the Chinese Government hosting it in Shanghai, from May 25-27, 2004.

"More than half the people in developing countries-2.8 billion-live in poverty, on less than \$2 a day. How can we possibly achieve the Millennium Development Goal of cutting this number in half by the year 2015, without large-scale solutions that can be widely reproduced?" points out World Bank President, James D. Wolfensohn, from headquarters in Washington D.C.

The main objective of the learning process and conference is to uncover the economic, social, and governance components that enabled countries to achieve poverty-reducing development results on a large scale; share these lessons across regions and countries; and disseminate them widely to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. This process is now known as the Global Learning Process.

In South Asia the case studies are being drawn from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. South Asia also hosted two high level delegations for field-visits, in India and in Bangladesh. The case studies are broadly arranged under two main categories known to impact poverty reduction: social inclusion and investment climate (see box).

The learning process leading up to the Conference in Shanghai is being prepared through a series of interactive videoconferences, online dialogues, and site visits that started last December, and will continue on through April. This interactive process includes:

- More than 70 cases representing most economic and social sectors will form the backbone of the global exchanges. Eleven case studies are being contributed by South Asia
- Site visits to eleven project sites in several countries will complement the cases and add a human dimension through interviews and dialogues with experts, stakeholders, and other central actors. In South Asia, visits in India and Bangladesh are planned for February.
- Eight online discussions will be held in parallel with the videoconferences to broaden the dialogue and give access to thousands of practitioners who may not attend the videoconferences and the conference in Shanghai.

To ensure a rich multilateral exchange of knowledge and broad participation by donors, the World Bank and the Chinese government have engaged with many external partners to develop the Global Learning Process and Conference. Those partners include: Governments, civil society groups, U.N. agencies, multilateral development institutions, bilateral aid agencies, and regional development banks.

The Conference in Shanghai will bring some 600 participants together around a series of success stories in development, providing high visibility to approaches that have been effective in poverty reduction. The participants will share their insights with peers from other developing and developed countries about what worked, what did not, and why. The proceedings will be available over the Web through video streaming.

For more information on the Shanghai process visit: www.reducingpoverty.org

CASE STUDIES

Social Inclusion:

India: BHOOMI: On-line delivery of land titles to rural farmers in Karnataka

India: Lessons from the Land Reform Movement in West Bengal

India: Women's Self-Help Groups in India: Participatory Poverty Alleviation in Action

India: Community-government partnership helps get millions into school: The Case of Madhya Pradesh

India: The Milk Revolution of **India:** Investing in Rural Producer Organizations

Bangladesh: Microcredit Programs and their Impact on Women's Empowerment

Bangladesh: Education Programs in Bangladesh and their Impact on Girls

Pakistan: Aga Khan Rural Support Program and National Rural Support Program

Investment Climate:

Bhutan: Sustainable Development through Good Governance and Decentralization

India: Evolution of Democratic Decentralization in India

India: Addressing Infrastructure Needs of the Poor: The Tamil Nadu Experience of Public Private Partnerships