

**The Report of Standing Committee
on Social and Economic Development
for B.E. 2546 to 2548 (A.C. 2003 to 2005)***

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The Report of Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development for B.E. 2546 to 2548 (A.C. 2003 to 2005)

The social and economic development is about people. As Buddhists association, we concern about the poor and vulnerable people in countries with populous Buddhists. Among the six billion people living on the earth today, five billions live in the developing countries.

The Millennium Development Goals (proposed by the United Nations and promulgated in 2000) set specific targets for eradicating poverty and improving people's lives: to reduce half of poverty in the world by year 2015. The common vision of WFB and UN can be integrated and collaborated in helping poor people in our Buddhism community.

It is well understood that the best way to combat the poverty is to help the poor people increasing income, providing shelter, getting good education and nutrition. Our report of future missions for Buddhists associations as well as the World Fellowship of Buddhists will therefore focus on those issues.

I. Review the Plan and Actions in Past Two Years

Before proposing the ideas of WFB's future action plan for the Buddhists community, we report the actions taken in past two years. The plan for social and economic development BE 2546 – 2547 (AC 2003 – 2004) has three parts. First part is the concept ~ social concerning and economical development. The second is action ~ visit and concerning. The third is sharing ~ experience exchange. (Please refer to Appendix I for the details). The plan is formulated in line with the framework of the WFB two year plan and copied with the proposals and resolutions of the standing committee on social and economic development which was endorsed by the 22nd WFB general conference at Shah Alam, Malaysia in 2002.

According to the Plan, we check what have been done and how was the result in the past three years. Our original scope of conducting social concerning and economical development conference in five continents, namely Asia, America, Europe, Africa and Australia, may be too ambitious. It may be modified to begin from Asia with solid action report of teams as Section II describes in the regional conference.

1. Reports by WFB regional Centers

We try to inform every regional center to make a social and economic development

report. Until now the number of submitted report is zero.

2. Action ~ visit and concerning

There was a practical and wonderful experience to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Taiwan Samadhi Village in Sri Lanka to share with the members of WFB. As everybody knows the sudden and dramatic attack of the tsunami in South Asia Pacific Ocean on 26th December 2004 had destroyed thousands of homeless refugees in one hour. Buddhism Associations in Taiwan had devoted many human resources, time and budget into the rescue actions in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. After nearly ten months, the three hundreds houses donated and built by Taiwanese Buddhists had been completed and ready to accommodate three hundreds tsunami victim families at Taiwan Samadhi Village in Hambantota, Sri Lanka. I am honor to be invited as the delegate of Buddhist Association of ROC (Taiwan) to attend the opening ceremony of Taiwan village on 10th September 2005.

Among various Buddhist individual or organizational donors, BAROC donated 68 houses and the Dharma Drum Foundation donated 100 houses. The unit cost of each house is US\$4,240. The costs of 300 unites add up to US\$1,272,000 in total. The action is just beginning. We are adding some other humanitarian actions such as medical team service (village medical station and a seasonal medical service group from Taiwan), the public building, social and economic development plan and actions.

In the same trip, Ven. Dr. BodagamaChandima (country project leader for tsunami reconstruction in Sri Lanka)inaugurated the second Taiwan village and the construction is now on going. Our visiting and concerning are continuous.

3. Information Service

Due to the necessary of measuring development progress and see its effect on needy people, we need good statistics or information. If we can act now with realism and foresight based on good information, we can make the last difference of Buddhists in poor countries. Besides, with the rising of information society and e-generation, our Buddhism relief and preaching activities need be modernized and become knowledgeable on local, national or regional economic and social affairs and poverty needs. Most people pay close attention to the benefits that can be derived from practice, yet they are unwilling to put in the effort needed to accumulate such benefits. We understand the difficulty of getting traditional num, monks, or Buddhists at home to pay their energy or volunteer time in learning e-skills. However it is vitally important to do so for the

spread and influential of WFB tomorrow.

South and East Asia are now facing the trend of economic integration and globalization. This economic regional block owns the most populous Buddhists. I therefore invite Dr. Lee-in Chen Chiu to collect some social and economic development indicators of East and South Asian countries for the reference of our future relief actions. We hope the information provided in next section can help our members of WFB understanding people's problems better in each country.

“No Substitute for Hard Work”

“A Correct View is the Compass for Proper Practices”

II. Buddhists social and economic relief actions to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals: eradicating poverty and improving lives

For achieving the missions of eradicating poverty and improving lives of Buddhists communities or countries, it is important to understand the capacity of rich countries and the need of developing countries. We therefore summarize several key development indicators in Appendix II for comparison.

According to definition of country development level by the World Bank (2004 World Development Indicators), countries with GNI per capita estimated to be \$735 or less is low income; \$736-\$2,935 is lower middle income; \$2,936-\$9,075 is upper middle income; \$9,076 or more is high income. We can classify the 14 pro-Buddhism countries of South and East Asian countries into four categories: **(1) high income countries: Japan, Singapore, Korea and Taiwan; (2) upper middle income countries: Malaysia; (3) lower middle income countries: Thailand, China, The Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia; and then (4) low income countries: India, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Cambodia.**

Our social relief visit and concerning activities can be expected to organize money and volunteers from high income countries to aid the lower middle and low income countries. If estimated by purchasing power parity GNI per capita, the last nine ranking countries can be upgraded to upper one income level. It seems poor people living in pro-Buddhism Asian developing countries is not too miserable.

As to the only upper middle countries, Malaysia, we hope after five more years, our relief or aids can be graduated. Our efforts can then put on to help their people to organize their own NGOs from rich areas to help the needy people in poor areas. This is because the autonomous social relief capacity emerges when GNI per capita reach \$5,000 ~ \$8,000. Such strategies can foster this society the autonomous capacity building ability on conducting social relief missions within its own country. If estimated by PPP

GNI per capita, Thailand and China can up shift to this income level.

The best approach of establishing sustainable Buddhists growing societies is to give aids while monitoring or evaluating the efficiency (including no corruptions) and transparency of national and local governments who need Buddhists charitable aids in implementing their social and economic policies and plans in the targeting communities. It is important to make sure that the majority of our charitable funds can be distributed directly to the needy people.

After reviewing the 11 education and health related development indicators in Appendix II, we suggest these two social service areas are crucial in improving lives in these nine countries. WFB or local Buddhists association can organize rich enterprises or people to devote into. However our focus areas in each nation can be different. Among nine low and lower middle income countries, it is quiet obvious that Sri Lanka and the Philippines governments have better performance on their youth education (as shown by the indicators on primary completion rate, adult literacy rate and youth literacy rate). Our care and concerns can focus on more health services. For such well educated youth, Sri Lanka needs help on job creation since its youth unemployment is extraordinarily high.

As to the visit and concerning actions providing to Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, it is necessary to cover both education and health issues. Bangladesh and Thailand has serious problems on children labor as shown in the high ratio of children age 10-14 in the labor force. This part need train some local NGOs to monitor the education right disputes in the family. As to the health and nutrition problems of child under age 5, Cambodia, India, Bangladesh are the most severe countries; Indonesia, China and Philippines are the second serious countries as shown by the “mortality rate” and “prevalence of child malnutrition” of child under five per 1,000 live birth. In those countries, infant nursery centers and/or public health stations in poor rural township are needed.

The ideas proposed above and following the development statistics are based on national data. It is vitally important that Venerable Buddhism leaders in poor rural villages keep their eyes on the progress of similar statistics in their local communities, securing international donations and health service (i.e. injection, family sanitary education...etc) for their people, and also urge the local government officials to make efforts in improving lives. WFB can organize charitable fund and medical experts from high income countries to set up health centers so as to conduct regular medical service and train the local experts. Dharma Dram Mountain Association and Chi Zhi Foundation from Taiwan to Sri Lanka and Indonesia are currently conducting such practices.

What we can do is more than what we can analyze in this report. It worth to organize experts from our Buddhists at home into several ad hoc task forces on education

and health within Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development of WFB and to give several pilot projects.

III. Adhering to the Precepts

“Faith in Self, Faith in Method, Faith in Dharma”

In conclusion, from our four points of report above, we would like to invite all Buddha to join our relief missions for South and East Asian countries. The Great Buddha teaches us: Everyone can be a Buddha as long as we pay our love to those who need us. The nowadays world and ideal world is fostered by many compassionate Buddha. Buddha is problem discover and also problem wonderful solver. Let us follow the footprint of the Great Buddha and conduct above plans step by step: Practice the Discipline, Meditation and Wisdom diligently so as to eliminate the greed, hate, and foolish. Most people stand to develop the Compassion, Loving-kindness, Happiness and Givingness four unlimited mind to build a more peaceful and harmony world.

Ming Kuang

19 April 2006

Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Social and Economical Development

WORLD FELLOWSHIP OF BUDDHIST (WFB)

Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development

Chairperson Ven. Ming Kuang Taiwan R.O.C

Plan for social and economic be 2546-2547 (2003-2004)

This plan is formulated in line with the framework of the WFB two year plan and with

The proposals and resolutions of the standing committee on
social and economic development

Endorsed by the 22nd WFB general conference at Shah Alam, Malaysia in 2002

1. Concept ~ social concerning and economical development

Objectives

- 1) Social, economical basic concept
- 2) Social view of Buddhism, Economical view of Buddhism
- 3) Social problem and the way to solve
- 4) Economical problem and the way to solve

Implementation

- 1) To conduct social concerning and economical development conference in divisioning area Asia, America, Europe, Africa, Australia, five continent the meeting time should be finished before next 23rd WFB conference.
- 2) To invite each area WFB'S regional center delegate to attend the conference.
- 3) Each area's meeting result should mail to social and economical standing committee and shall make a report in 23rd WFB conference social and economic meeting.

2. Action ~ visit and concerning

Objectives

Give real concerning and assistant for low social and economical developing country.

Implementation

- 1) To select a low social and economical developing country that situation is very serious now and which will become the first and concerning one.
- 2) To organize a visiting group to take concerning.
- 3) The time will be finished before December 2003.

3. Sharing ~ experience exchange

Objectives

Every WFB regional center have wonderful experience about social concerning and economical development. Let the experiences sharing learning mutual and growth together.

Implementation

- 1) Hoping every WFB regional center have a social concerning and economical development report, The report should be finished before December 2003 and that will mail to SE standing committee.
- 2) To collect all the reports, through editing and publishing WFB social and economical information. To promote experience exchange.

Social and Economic Indications of South and East Asian Countries (Millennium Development Goals: eradicating poverty and improving lives)

country	1. Economy and Income					2. Assessing Vulnerability				3. Education efficiency				
	Gross national Income per capita \$ 2003 ^b rank 2003		ppp gross nation income ^a per capita \$billion \$ 2002 rank 2002			Gross domestic product per capita % growth 2002-2003	Youth unemployment Male % of male labor force age 15-24 1995-2003 ^a Female % of female labor force age 15-24 1995-2003 ^a		Children in the labor force % age 10-14 1980 2003		Achieve universal primary education primary completion rate% 2001/01~2003/04 ^b	Primary completion rate % of relevant age group Total 2000/01—2003/04 ^b Male 2000/01—2003/04 ^b Female 2000/01—2003/04 ^b		
Bangladesh	400	173	258	1870	163	3.4	11	10	32	27	73	73	71	76
Cambodia	300	183	27 ^d	2000 ^d	160	3.3	32	41	7	6	81	81	85	76
China	1100	134	6410 ^f	4980 ^f	119	8.6	--	--	15	6	98	98	100	95
India	540	159	3062 ^d	2880 ^d	146	7.1	--	--	17	11	81	81	85	77
Indonesia	810	146	689	3210	142	2.7	12	15	11	7	95	95	94	96
Japan	34180	7	3629	28450	19	2.5	24	46	0	0	--	--	--	--
Korea, Rep.	12030	49	862	18000	47	2.5	10	7	0	0	97	97	96	97
Malaysia	3880	82	222	8970	81	3.3	--	--	4	2	92	92	93	92
Philippines	1080	135	379	4640	128	2.5	17	23	11	4	95	95	97	94
Singapore	21230	29	103	24180	30	-1.0	4	6	0	0	--	--	--	--
Sri lanka	930	140	72	3740	136	4.7	20	31	3	1	113	113	118	108
Taiwan	11841	--	--	--	--	3.2	--	--	0	0	--	--	--	--
Thailand	2190	105	462	7450	87	6.2	7	6	20	10	86	86	86	87
Vietnam	480	165	202	2490	151	6.1	--	--	13	4	95	95	96	95

Social and Economic Indications of South and East Asian Countries (cont.)
(Millennium Development Goals: eradicating poverty and improving lives)

country	4. Education outcomes		5. Health services and use			6. Nutrition		
	Adult literacy rate %age 15 and older Male Female 1990 2002 1990 2002	Youth literacy rate % age 15 and older Male Female 1990 2002 1990 2002	Physicians Per 1,000 people 1990 2004	Hospital beds Per 1,000 people 1990 1995 – 2002 ^a	Reduce child mortality Under-five Mortality rate per 1,000 live birth 1990 2003	Prevalence of child malnutrition % of child under age 5 Weight for age Height for age 1995–2003 ^a 1995–2003 ^a	Low Birth weight babies % of births 1995– 2003a	
Bangladesh	44	50	0.2	0.3	--	144	52.5	
	24	31	0.2			69	48.5	30
Cambodia	78	81	0.1	2.1	--	115	45.2	
	49	59	0.2			140	44.6	12
China	87	95 ^b	1.5	2.6		49	10	
	69	87 ^b	1.6	2.5		37	14.2	6
India	62	68	0.5	0.8	--	123	46.7	
	36	45	0.5			87	44.9	30
Indonesia	87	92	0.1	0.7	--	91	27.3	
	73	83	0.2			41	42.2	9
Japan	--	--	1.7	16.0		6	--	

	--	--	--	--	2.0	16.5	5	--	8
Korea, Rep.	--	--	-	-	0.8	3.1	9	--	
	--	--	--	--	1.8	6.1	5	--	4
Malaysia	87	92b	95	97b	0.4	2.1	21	19	
	74	85b	94	97b	0.7	2.0	7	15.6	10
Philippines	92	93b	97	94b	0.1	1.4	--	63	31.8
	91	93b	97	96b	1.2			36	32.1
Singapore	95	95b	99	99b	1.3	3.6	--	8	3.4
	89	91b	99	100b	1.4			5	2.2
Sri lanka	93	95	96	97	0.1	2.7	-	32	32.9
	85	90	94	97	0.4	-		15	20.4
Taiwan	--	--	--	--	1.1	4.4	6.3	--	--
	--	--	--	--	1.7	(2004)		--	--
Thailand	95	95b	99	98b	1.5	1.6		40	17.6
	89	91b	98	98b	2.0	2.0		26	13.4
Vietnam	94	--	94	--	0.4	3.8		53	33.8
	87	--	94	--	0.5	1.7		23	36.5

Sources: 1. World Development Indicators CD-ROM (2005), The World Bank. 2. Taiwan Statistical Data Book, (2004, 2005), Council for Economic and Development, Republic of China (Taiwan).