

Current Status and Future Directions of Rural Development: CIRDAP Perspectives



**Centre on Integrated Rural Development for
Asia and the Pacific**

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Foreword

The concept of integrated rural development (IRD) was high in the agenda nationally and internationally during 1970s. The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific was also created under the aegis of FAO almost during the same time in 1979. The mandate given to CIRDP is, to assist national actions, promote regional cooperation and act as a servicing institution for rural development.

However, the IRD concept could not gain the expected momentum, mainly due to the poor performance by the states. Hence, several new players such as NGOs, I/NGOs, micro finance institutions, civil societies and private consulting firms emerged in rural development (RD) and poverty alleviation (PA) scenario. Sizable donor resources have been channelled through the new actors, into the RD and PA efforts and activities. Indeed, they have done excellent job to generate economic opportunities at the micro level and bring out several socio-economic issues of common concern to the forefront. However, their efforts are not sequenced along with the respective government agencies to play a complementary role, nor a coordinating mechanism has been developed at local, national and donors' level to synergize the achievements. At the same time, the core issue of strengthening and energizing the government institutions largely remained unattended. As a result, the capacity of the state to address the important issues of broad based economic growth and sustainable development was further weakened. Similarly, the inter-governmental organizations like CIRDP also had to struggle to find its niche of intervention and compete with market – led institutions for resources and opportunities.

Under these circumstances, CIRDP was relentlessly working to put in place a comprehensive mechanism of knowledge generation, information disseminations and review of RD and PA processes using its link institutions (which are the leading national level IRD centers) and contact ministries (ministry related to rural development) in the member countries and using its Technical Committee, Executive Committee and Governing Council at the regional level through organizing regional policy dialogue on current issues relevant to CMCs. This year CIRDP organized a dialogue on RD and PA, on an experimental basis on 1st October 2005. The Rural Development Report prepared by CIRDP on the basis of the available data and knowledge was also discussed during the dialogue. A policy paper on the emerging issues of RD and PA was presented to stimulate discussions during the dialogue. The review of the issues in the issue paper points out a number of areas where appropriate actions may be taken to strengthen the comprehensive mechanism in the CMCs. Once the mechanism is institutionalized, this process will be repeated once in every two years. The lessons from the success cases, learning from the past undertakes and continued deliberations among the CMCs at the national and regional levels through such dialogues will immensely help achievement of sustained growth of the rural economy and poverty alleviation and human development and achievement of the MDGs.

I hope this report will be useful to the policy makers and experts in the area. I would like to thank Dr. Momtaz Uddin Ahmed, Director Research, and Dr. Q. K. Ahmad, Chairman, BUP and Dr. B.S. Rao, Director (Training), CIRDP, for their excellent work.

January 2006

Dr. Durga P. Paudyal
Director General

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	:	Asian Development Bank
AFTA	:	ASEAN Free Trade Area
ARCDP	:	Agrarian Reform Community Development Project
ASEAN	:	Association of South East Asian Nations
BARD	:	Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development
BIDS	:	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BUP	:	Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad
CDF	:	Credit Development Forum
CDP	:	Country Development Programme
CFSD	:	CIRDAP Strategic Framework Document
CIRDAP	:	Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific
CKGRM	:	Comprehensive Knowledge Generation and Review Mechanism
CLIs	:	CIRDAP Link Institutions
CMCs	:	CIRDAP Member Countries
DDC	:	District Development Committee
EAP	:	East Asia and the Pacific Region
EC	:	European Community
EC	:	Executive Committee
EHRI	:	Emergency Humanitarian Response Initiative
EU	:	European Union
FAO	:	Food and Agriculture Organization
GC	:	Governing Council
GDI	:	Gross Development Index
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	:	Gross National Product
GOB	:	Government of Bangladesh
HDI	:	Human Development Index
HDR	:	Human Development Report
HRD	:	Human Resources Development
IAAP	:	Intensive Agriculture Area Programme
IADP	:	Integrated Agriculture District Programme
IDPs	:	Internationally Displaced Persons
IFAD	:	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	:	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	:	International Non-Government Organisations
IRD	:	Integrated Rural Development
IRDp	:	Integrated Rural Development Programme
IT	:	Information Technology
LDF	:	Local Development Fund
M & E	:	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	:	Millennium Development Goals
MFI	:	Microfinance Institutions
MISFA	:	Microfinance Investment Support Programme for Afghanistan
MNCs	:	Multinational Companies

MRRD	:	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NCC	:	National Coordination Council
NDF	:	National Development Framework
NFP	:	National Focal Point
NGOs	:	Non-Governmental Organisations
NRAP	:	National Rural Access Programme
NSC	:	National Steering Committee
NSP	:	National Solidarity Programme
ODA	:	Official Development Assistance
OPP3	:	National Vision Policy
PA	:	Poverty Alleviation
PPP	:	Purchasing Power Parity
PPRT	:	Development Programme for the hard core Poor
PRSPs	:	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RD	:	Rural Development
RDR	:	Rural Development Report
REDLSF	:	Rural Employment Development Soft Loan
RM	:	Ringgit Malaysia
SAARC	:	South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation
SAFTA	:	South Asian Free Trade Area
SAPTA	:	South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement
TNCs	:	Transnational Corporations
TTDC	:	Thana (Upazila) Training and Development Centre
UN	:	United Nations
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	:	United Nations Environment Programme
USA	:	United States of America
V-AID	:	Village Agricultural and Industrial Development Programme
VND	:	Vietnam Dong
WATSAN	:	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation

Chapter 1

Refocusing Rural Development: CIRDAP Initiatives and Perspectives

- Dr. Momtaz Uddin Ahmed*

I. Background

In the countries where the economy is predominantly rural with agriculture contributing to the major shares of GDP and labour absorption, broad based rural development holds the key to economic progress. The priority attached to rural development in such countries is further reinforced by the persistence of a severe poverty especially as a rural phenomenon. Thus in the majority of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region which are still predominantly rural and agricultural and also characterized by high incidence of poverty, inequality and widespread unemployment and underemployment comprehensive rural development encompassing sustained growth and development of both agriculture and non-agriculture activities should constitute an integral component of the national development strategies. The formidable challenge of lifting millions of the poor and the deprived above the poverty line in these countries now being inextricably linked with that of achieving the MDG goals and targets has made sustained growth of the rural economy an overriding concern of the policy makers. It is now commonly believed by the government of the developing countries of the Asia-Pacific region as well as by their development partners that in order to achieve MDGs comprehensive rural development efforts based on multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches are required.

Rural development in general and integrated rural development (IRD) in particular in its varied form and dimension enjoyed high priority in the development plans and policies of the CIRDAP member countries (CMCs) in the Asia-Pacific region, especially since 1970s¹. As is well-known, the concept of IRD earned enviable prominence in the 1970s because of the limitations of the single sector approach in the 1960s when agricultural development was being used almost conterminously with rural development. Many countries of the Asia-Pacific region initiated rural development programmes of various types and adopted a variety of approaches and models for planning and implementation of the IRD efforts and initiatives. Unfortunately, the results achieved have been modest and uneven across countries. Thus, despite being a priority agenda in the national development strategies and a major destination of donor support in the past decades rural development and poverty alleviation continue to remain major challenges in most of the developing countries. A complex of factors such as lack of proper articulation of the RD concept, a project-based approach as opposed to a pro-active policy support, lack of adequate political commitment and an effective implementation mechanism etc. have made overall RD efforts rather fragmented and uncoordinated and much short of the dynamism required to achieve desired results. A clear rethinking and refocusing of the rural development process is thus required to bring RD

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¹ A brief review of the South Asian and South-East Asian experiences is provided by Aslam, M. (2004) and a succinct review of African experiments in rural development is provided by Adam, A.Y. (2003).

at the centre stage of the national development strategies and turn it into an effective mechanism for ensuring sustained growth of the rural economy and alleviation of endemic poverty in the developing countries of the Asia-Pacific Region.

II. Refocusing Rural Development

Rural development, a buzzword of the 1970s seems to have been relegated to the background due to paradigm shifts in the national development strategies of the developing countries over the last two decades. An upsurge of interest in poverty alleviation through participation and empowerment and arrangements for social safety nets and security has pushed RD to a somewhat peripheral status. This has been further reinforced by the currently ruling paradigm of national development through market liberalization; privatization, globalization and achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) and targets. Due to lack of concerted efforts by the national governments of the developing countries to articulate the RD concept, dwindling donor support and almost unremitting debates (Singh, R.R. 1999 Frank, E. and Stephen, B. 2001) concerning RD approaches and conceptualization (i.e. concerning primacy of various approaches such as 'intensive agricultural development'; 'integrated rural development' 'livelihoods approach' 'participatory paradigms' etc) RD as a policy tool is currently scrambling for a space in the overall national development initiatives.

A new rethinking is thus currently under way to redefine RD and reincarnate it in the face of challenges arising from two major directions: (a) those arising from the changes in the dynamics of the rural economy and society (i.e. long-term viability of small farm dominated agriculture as an engine of growth, the newly discovered potentials of the rural non-farm economy, increase in the quality of rural population as productive agents, decentralization etc.) and (b) those arising from changes in the donor perspective brought about by globalization and achievement of MDGs and their implications for rural development and poverty alleviation efforts. In the light of these new contexts, the current thinking (Carolihe, A. and Seim M) on RD suggests a set of five principles as the determinants of a successful RD strategy which include: (i) diversity of rural situations, (ii) past and future changes in the rural areas, (iii) synergizing RD approach with the poverty alleviation strategies, (iv) democratic decentralization, and (v) increase of sectoral productivity in the rural areas to maximize economic growth and minimize poverty. In fact, some of the leading donors are also in the process of designing and pursuing new strategies for RD in the light of the new policy environments. The European Commission (EC), for example, emphasizes on the need for new thinking on rural development and advocates an "overarching" policy approach (as opposed to a "sectoral" approach) designed to promote comprehensive rural development based on what they call "six pillars", such as: (i) progressing towards peaceful, equitable, open and democratic rural societies, (ii) promoting effective and accountable institutions at national and local levels, (iii) pursuing policies augmenting rural growth, (iv) strengthening access of the rural poor to assets, (v) promoting sustainable national resources management and (vi) ensuring greater coherence between national and international policies affecting RD and PA processes. Similarly, IFAD and World Bank also call for refocusing rural development to concentrate on improving the well-being of the rural people and reducing rural poverty on a sustained basis. These objectives are ascertained to be pursued through adopting multi-

disciplinary and pluralist approaches to RD and PA, building an enabling environment, ensuring better access to technology, markets and institutions, facilitating empowerment and participation and strengthening the process of rural governance.

A careful scrutiny of the new narratives on rural development discussed in this section would reveal that there is an urgent need for a fresh look at the rural development policies and strategies in order to articulate a viable rural development strategy for the CMCs. Keeping this in view the second article in this volume discusses the emerging issues that need to be addressed in pursuing sustainable rural development and poverty alleviation policies.

III. Efficient Implementation of RD and PA Policies

Side by side with conceptual articulation and relocation of the RD strategy at the centre stage of the national development policies, the need for efficient implementation of RD and PA policies has become equally pressing. As multi-dimensional issues, RD and PA programmes are implemented through multi-pronged approaches by multiple agencies of the government, NGOs and other private sector actors. The poor performance of the IRD institutions of the national governments along with donor preference for the non-governmental actors has paved the way for pro-active participation by the new players in the RD and PA implementation process.

However, the efforts of these multiple actors, especially those of the NGOs and I/NGOs are not always synchronized and sequenced with those of the government agencies to ensure complementarity and coordination resulting in a holistic approach based on strategic partnership and collaboration. On the contrary, RD is now approached and understood by its segmented tools and strategies prohibiting development of coordinated efforts at local, national and regional levels. As a result, the strategic issue of strengthening and revitalizing the government institutions (i.e. RD ministries and their affiliated and specialized agencies/departments) remains neglected and continues to transform into weak and inefficient entities adversely affecting the process of sustained rural development and national economic growth. Despite increasingly large budget shares of the national governments going to RD activities², generous financial support by the donor agencies and involvement of a large number of institutional actors in the RD and PA implementation tasks, the overall outcomes of these interventions have been rather modest in many of the CMCs. For example, the degree of success achieved by the CMCs in achieving agricultural growth, poverty reduction, demographic transition and social development has been significantly varied with much being left to be done in these areas by the majority of the countries. These issues are discussed and documented in papers presented by Dr. Rao and Dr. Q.K. Ahmed in the Policy Dialogue and published in this volume.

² A glaring example of increasingly larger sectoral allocations going to RD in the successive Five Year Plans can be cited from Bangladesh's experience. For example, the sectoral allocation for RD increased from Tk. 1,910 million during the First Five Year Plan (1973-1978) to Tk.15,810 million during the Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-1995) which was raised substantially to a much higher amount of Tk.87,002 million during the first Five Year Plan (1997-2002). Cf: BARD,2003-2004.

Apart from lack of strong policy-backing and policy articulation, implementation difficulties and inefficiencies resulting from over-centralization, bureaucratic procedures and uncoordinated efforts etc. have been important bottlenecks underlying limited success achieved by the earlier RD and PA efforts. There is thus an urgent need for developing and institutionalizing a concerted and coherent RD implementation system in the CMCs at both national and regional levels for achieving desirable results. The need for design and implementation of a cohesive institutional mechanism to effectively and efficiently implement the RD and PA policies is further reinforced by the impending challenges of globalization and achievement of MDGs within the framework of the current market economy paradigm. As the goals and targets of MDGs are time-bound and disaggregated and need to be implemented by different line ministries and their affiliated agencies and departments, NGOs and other private sector stakeholders, this will involve rigorous monitoring and evaluation through collection, collation and analysed of data for tracking progress of implementation and evaluating impacts and outcomes of RD and PA related programmes and activities. CIRDAP as an inter-governmental organization for coordinating RD and PA activities in the Asia-Pacific region can play an important role in the process of developing and institutionalizing a coherent RD implementation system in the CMCs at both national and regional levels for facilitating sustained progress in rural development and poverty alleviation. It is against this context that CIRDAP organized the regional policy dialogue to discuss as to how best it can assist the CMCs in developing and institutionalizing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanism for assisting and improving RD and PA policy formulation and implementation processes and achieving accelerated development of the rural economies for poverty alleviation and achievement of MDGs. The paper, "Development of Comprehensive knowledge Generation and Review Mechanism of Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Processes in the CIRDAP Member Countries" (abbreviated henceforth as CGKRM) presented in this volume outlines the broad features of the M and E mechanism proposed by CIRDAP which was approved in principle by its policy making bodies.

IV. Role of CIRDAP in the changed context

CIRDAP's vision is to see a poverty-free and prosperous Asia-Pacific region through effective implementation of RD and PA processes in a globalised environment representing paradigm shifts in the national development policies and strategies. It is thus imperative that the role of CIRDAP as well as its link institutions (CLIs) be redefined and reformulated. For this, appropriate mechanisms and procedures for inter-country and inter-institutional networking need to be developed and strengthened. From this perspective the proposed idea of CGKRM is expected to play an important role in promoting regular and meaningful exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences regarding RD and PA processes and achievement of MDGs in the CMCs. Besides ensuring a holistic approach and better understanding of the policy issues, implementation process and achievements relating to the multi-dimensional and cross-cutting issues of the RD and PA processes the proposed mechanism of knowledge generation and policy coordination may also win important political support and commitment of the CMC governments towards prioritizing RD policies and strengthening the RD and PA implementation mechanism (Paudyal, D.P. 2005).

To reiterate, the main purpose of establishing the proposed CGKRM is to put in place a process of continuous review and upgrading of RD and PA policies and programmes, and activities so that the policy priorities can be re-fixed as desired and the outputs and impacts evaluated and improved. However, effective operation of the CGKRM will be critically dependent upon the identification and development of an appropriate set of indicators reflecting the true status RD efforts and impacts, collection of adequate and accurate information and preparation of authentic review reports. Most important of all, effective collaboration between CIRDAP and the CLIs and proactive support from the RD ministries and their affiliated organizations will be the important determinants of the CIRDAP initiatives.

V. Concluding Remarks

The RD policy formation and implementation issues need to be constantly reviewed and redesigned for greater effectiveness and impacts in view of the changed circumstances. While there is nothing to reinvent, regular exchange of ideas, experiences and examples of success and failures among the CMCs through a regional forum like CIRDAP should go a long way towards facilitating knowledge creation, knowledge storing and dissemination relating to RD and PA processes for achieving greater success and improved results and outcomes. CIRDAP enjoying the greater comparative advantage of having close links with the CLIs and a strong base of regional and international contacts must strive hard to play the catalytic role of a powerful and effective 'advocacy body' a regional focal point' and an 'experienced broker' to enhance regional cooperation in rural development and poverty alleviation. In the process, building strategic partnership with all the major actors working in the field of RD and PA process will be a highly desirable step for CIRDAP towards carrying out her mandated responsibilities in the changed environment.

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Rural Development 2005: An Overview*

Dr. B. Sudhakar Rao**

1. Introduction

An attempt is made in this brief overview of the RDR 2005 to highlight the current levels of socio-economic development and poverty situation in the CMCs of the Asia-Pacific region with particular emphasis on the major policies and strategies relating to rural development and poverty alleviation. Based on a brief review of the major findings, the existing policy gaps are identified and future policy directions are suggested to put in place an appropriate set of policy interventions, incentive structures and institutional mechanism for achieving sustained rural development and accelerated poverty alleviation in the CMCs. Generating interest for policy dialogue and encouraging mutual exchange of ideas, knowledge and experiences among the CMCs regarding RD and PA processes has been a major thrust in preparing the RDR 2005. The overview has been presented in four parts, each dealing with the core issues discussed in the main Report.

PART - I The Setting

The policies pursued in the Asia-Pacific region in the realm of rural development and poverty alleviation have achieved considerable success, though in varying magnitude. The liberal policies pursued, the structural reforms undertaken and economic reforms initiated by all countries in the region irrespective of political contexts – have yielded rich dividends. This can be seen in the leap forward in GDP growth; knowledge based sectoral growth, productivity levels, human development, farm and non-farm sector growth, decentralized efforts and innovative micro interventions. But these achievements have not been uniformly distributed among all the countries of the region (Table 1). There are certain islands of growth, prosperity and a flourishing market economy side by side with pockets of high poverty, illiteracy and destitution. While highlighting various issues the use of statistical tables has been kept to be minimum as such information are available in the main report.

Status of Rural Development and Poverty

The region represents a departure from the over all world scenario. A sub-region, within the region viz. South Asia is still the abode of poverty with about 432 million poor living with an income of less than US \$1 a day. Out of 831 million undernourished in the world, South Asia

* This is an overview of the main report, Rural Development Report 2005, prepared by CIRDAP and presented in the Regional Policy Dialogue. The main report is available in printed form in CIRDAP (Study Series 199)

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takes the major chunk with about 312 million. South Asia and East Asia and Pacific together take a large share of the misery.

Poverty in South Asia

A small part of South Asia is not covered by CIRDAP viz. Bhutan and Maldives, as non-members. GDP per capita seems to be better in these two countries, relative to others.

Table 1: General Economic Indicators of the CIRDAP Member Countries

	GNP per capita	GDP growth rate	GDP share, 2002		
	(\$)	(%)	%	%	%
	2001	2002	Agriculture	Industry	Service
Afghanistan	-	-	-	-	-
Bangladesh	360	4.4	21.9	25.5	52.6
India	460	4.4	25.0(01)	25.9(01)	49.2(01)
Indonesia	690	3.7	17.5	44.5	38.1
Lao PDR	300	5.7 (01)	50.4	24.7	25
Malaysia	3330	4.0	9.1	48.3	46.4
Myanmar	-	-	*57.2	*10.5	*32.4
Nepal	250	4.9 (01)	40.6	21.8	40.8
Pakistan	420	4.4	24.2	22.4	53.4
Philippines	1030	4.6	14.7	32.5	52.8
Sri Lanka	880	3.0	20.1	26.3	53.6
Thailand	1940	5.0	9	42.5	48.5
Vietnam	410	6.8 (01)	23.0	38.5	38.5

* 2001

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a country facing challenges with respect to security, drugs, governance and reintegration of thousands of ex-combatants and millions of refugees and Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPs) into the society. To face these challenges in a situation of resource and capacity constraints, the government of Afghanistan has prioritized schemes and prepared an integrated, cohesive and coherent national development strategy viz. National Development Framework (NDF).

The economy always remained overwhelmingly rural and agrarian with around 77 percent of the total population living in the rural areas. Most of the absolute poor are also from rural areas, refugees and IDPs included. The NDF gave particular importance to rural development

consequent to the formation of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), whose mandate is to improve the livelihoods of the rural poor.

MRRD's policies and programmes are guided by the principles outlined in NDF – in the heart of which lie an emphasis on more integrated and sustainable social and economic development policy and support to poor people to escape from poverty and vulnerability on the basis of their own effort. MRRD traditionally is an implementing agency. However, realizing the importance of rural development that lies in the active participation of the rural people and taking experiences from the countries of the region, MRRD redefined its role and functions to a policy making and regulatory body ensuring proper implementation at different levels.

Its specific responsibilities now include: (1) the formulation of rural development policies, strategies and guidelines; (2) coordination and monitoring of other implementing agencies in rural development; and (3) mobilization of resources for rural development.

Most of the current major products have their roots in lessons learnt from the experiences of Asia Pacific region. The national solidarity programme, a large national development project, which provides block grants to projects covering all of Afghanistan (30 thousand villages) in 3 years is a project of similar type in Indonesia.

India

Within South Asia, India represents a giant economy, with a population size comparable to China. Its relatively higher economic growth rates, could lead only partially to solve the poverty problems. It's attention to the poverty problem at the highest levels of governance, the budgetary provisions earmarked, the number of programmes and institutions targeted to maximize benefits are however unmatched in size, contents and targets with other countries. But yet the poverty scenario represents an unbalanced growth between various regions in the country. It has a combined package to the poor, poorer regions and different schemes to have a direct attack on poverty – wage employment, self-employment, rural infrastructure development, basic needs attainment, institutional arrangements, credit linked women development and broad social safety nets in the wake of economic reforms. It is an early starter in rural development and an innovations provider in the rural development arena. But it has still 260 million people declared as living below poverty line. However, poverty is concentrated disproportionately in some states.

As many as 260 million or 22% of the total population are poor, defined in terms of calorie intake level. However, the proportion of the poor people will be higher if the poverty line is considered on expenditure level of US \$1 per day per person, it will be more than 34 percent. The concentration of poverty in the rural areas is fairly high, where 75 percent of the total poor people live in the rural areas, hilly areas, border areas, etc. It is also that the distribution of poverty across different states of India is fairly unequal. In some states the proportion of poor is as high as 48 percent such as Orissa where as in the Union Territory Delhi it is less than 1 percent.

Nepal

The impact of rural development programmes can also be seen, through regional disparities in poverty particularly in Nepal. The poverty scenario is the highest in the mountains (56 per cent), with the intensity and severity of poverty being also high, relative to other regions (18.5 and 8.2 per cent respectively). While, rural poverty predominates it is double than the urban poverty (44 and 23 per cent respectively with people living below poverty line) and the intensity and severity is also high, (12.5 per cent as against 7.0 in the former category, and 5.1 per cent as against 2.8 in the later category). There is a social problem that brings certain social classes compare unfavourably to Nepal's national average in adult literacy, years of schooling and over all human development index etc. However, sufficient improvements can be seen in social sectors, except child mortality rate at the end of 9th plan period relative to its previous periods.

The plans are for long range economic and social transformation as evidenced in targeted achievements at the end of Tenth Plan, compared to the present (2004). The significant aspect is that in spite of real GDP growing (projected) at 6.2 per cent, compared to 3.6 per cent at present and with a stagnant growth rate in population level (2.1%), there will be no marked decline in the Human Poverty Index (declining from 39.4 to 34). This calls for a paradigm shift in policies that would bring equitable development panorama in all the regions of the country and between all sections of society.

Nepal's Tenth Plan has incorporated local development fund (LDF) as an institutional mechanism under DDC to implement social mobilization process for poverty reduction in all villages. Village development programme in partnership with DDC/UNDP is aimed at improving economic condition of rural people, organize them into groups so as to transform into multi-purpose community organizations and provide opportunities for realizing self potential. In this process they are to transform themselves into self-governing institutions.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one country with a high density of population (839 per sq. km) and has over 70 per cent of population in the rural areas (2001). There are varying estimates of poverty, about 44 per cent in rural areas, with about 19 per cent referred to as hard core poor. The urban areas have more concentration of people living below poverty line, about 52 per cent and hard core poor of about 19 per cent during the year 2000.

In the Bangladesh context rural development is treated synonymously with economic, agricultural and social development as they are mutually reinforcing due to low per capita income, large rural population base, low per capita land availability, unemployment and underemployment. The integrated rural development approach, popularly known as the Comilla Model was a major innovative step, during 1970s, consisting of the major components, such as, rural works programmes, Upazilla training and development centers (TTDC) Thana Irrigation Programme and Two-Tier Cooperative model. Since 1980s, RD approaches have shifted towards targeted approaches with emphasis on broad based rural development through encouraging

development of infrastructure and income generating activities for the asset-less poor. In the 90s NGOs and government schemes continued with the emphasis on the poor with micro-credit as the vehicle for poverty reduction. Since independence, the country has witnessed different models/approaches such as own village development, swanirbhar, Thana Development Committee, Village Cooperative, etc. Firm commitment to rural development has been given in Article 16 of the constitution so as to adopt effective measures to bring out radical reformation in the rural areas through agricultural revolution, promotion of cottage industries, improvement in social sectors to remove disparities and to improve quality of life in rural areas.

Various rural development programmes are in operation, in addition to the significant role played by NGOs, who have gained certain monopoly in women empowerment and poverty alleviation through micro-credit interventions.

Poverty is an outcome of multiple factors operating at different levels of society. At the macro level the factors include low rate of economic growth, unequal distribution of income and assets and high density of population. Other factors include low level of human resource development, natural disaster and the limited provision of public services. Inadequate physical infrastructure, poor law and order situation, lack of effective local government for decentralised decision making also contributes to poverty among others.

Sri Lanka

Rural development has been a key concern of successive governments in Sri Lanka. Historically, abject rural poverty in the pre-colonial era was almost non-existent due to the very nature of its feudal structure, but the British who introduced export – oriented plantation agriculture resulted in a significant percentage of rural people to become landless and economically marginalized. Poverty in its present form of economic powerlessness was a result of the expropriation of land for establishment of the large plantation sector.

The political change in 1977 brought in new policies that were designed to achieve rapid economic growth. The new government decided to reorganise the rural development movement. In 1978 a separate Ministry of Rural Development was established. It was expected that the New Ministry would work in close contact with the rural masses. Almost simultaneously, a New Ministry of Rural Industrial Development was also established. Small industries, the development of livestock and pasture and the development of indigenous handicrafts, all fell within the purview of the new ministry.

The burden of adjustment to an open economy fell heavily on the low-income population. The economic losses of the poorer groups, especially those living in rural areas were not adequately compensated through the economic process. A committee of high-level officials was appointed by the Cabinet in 1987 to prepare an action programme within the framework of people-based development to tackle the problem of poverty, unemployment and malnutrition in the country.

Pakistan

The country has a population of 149 million. Of the total population 67 percent live in the rural areas, indicating the predominant role of agriculture. Over the years though the proportion of urban population has been increasing, it is still far behind the rural proportion. According to the recent estimates, about 32 percent of the country's population are poor. In rural areas about 39 percent of the population and in urban areas less than 23 percent are poor, implying the rural concentration of poverty.

Resource inequality is a causal factor of poverty in Pakistan. Other factors are related to the poor performance in the context of educational level, health parameters, women's empowerment and participation. There are also inadequate infrastructure facilities and services that contribute to the process. Poor governance is also an underlying factor causing poverty.

South East Asia

Some of the south east asian countries have infused dynamism into the asian economic system in spite of facing economic crisis for some periods. We turn to discuss them briefly.

Malaysia

Malaysia is a classic example pursuing successful poverty reducing strategies and the country is about to reach the stage of achieving millennium development goals. With an economic growth rate of 5.2 per cent in 2003, its monthly household income rose from Rm 1167 in 1990 to Rm 3011 in 2002. Since 1990, it reduced its poverty level from 17 per cent to 5 per cent, with an objective of developing rural areas as new centers of economic activity. Since inception of the policy for long term development (1957 – 70), intensive rural development efforts i.e. intensive new land development activities by FELDA, irrigation for double cropping, re-plantation of rubber and diversification of agriculture (oil palm) and with substantial allocations for rural schools, health, electricity, roads and credit supply etc. have been under way. It has provided a conducive environment for private sector in export trade in rubber, tin and timber and for private sector investments in these activities.

In the earlier phase, prior to new economic policy period, in spite of high growth of around 6 per cent, fundamental issues like high incidence of poverty, unemployment (8 per cent, 1970), economic imbalances were not addressed. Its policy framework for national development has significantly changed the scenario. Its vision for 2020 is for total development.

The development programme for the hard core poor (PPRT) launched during 1989, involves registration of hard core poor in every district for income generation, basic amenities, human development and welfare assistance. The National Vision Policy (OPP 3, 2001 to 2010) aimed at establishing a progressive and prosperous society, balanced development and building a competitive and resilient nation. Under this policy the target for poverty reduction is set at 0.5 per cent by 2005, target specific to pockets of poverty (Bhumi Putra minorities in Sab/Sar,

Orang Asli, Urban poor) and set an eligibility criteria of RM 1200 per month. The focus is on the bottom 30 per cent of the population and various measures have been pronounced under OPP3.

A significant achievement can be noticed that GNP per capita has shown tremendous increase from RM 1132 (US \$368) to RM 13418 (US\$ 3531) from the year 1970 to 2000. At macro level economic growth with policies promoting new employment opportunities, specially in the non-agricultural sector have succeeded in attracting increasing number of rural households to earn paid income. The implementation of public sector programmes provided physical and social infrastructure and encouraged the poor to be active members of the workforce.

Myanmar

Myanmar, is an agrarian economy, with 4.8 million farm households and with about 63 per cent farm holdings of less than 2 Ha. About 9.7 million ha. are used for crop cultivation.

In terms of its GDP, the economy has shown a tendency for diversification of agriculture and moved on an innovative technological path. The sectoral distribution of GDP shows a rapid rise in the service sector, from only 4.2 per cent (1990-91) to 15.7 per cent (2001 – 02) and in trade from 2.4 per cent to 11.1 per cent during last 10 years. The structural changes in the economy are significant where the private sector (including the peasant sector) GDP account for 78.3 per cent, compared to state sector GDP of 21.3 per cent in 2001 – 02. The noticeable performance in the production sector is with respect to agriculture's contribution to GDP, which is about 45.1 in 2001 – 2002, with a small decline from its previous position of 47.8 per cent (1990 – 2001). However, the growth rate of agriculture GDP touched 12.9 per cent (2002).

Myanmar looks to agriculture as the base for all-round development as it contributes 45 per cent of GDP, 18 per cent of exports and 63 per cent of labour force engaged. The rural development tasks are specified in terms of improving rural transport condition, supply of safe drinking water, education, health standards and to promote over all economic development in rural areas. The strategies for agriculture, as part of over all rural development includes bringing new lands under cultivation, improved irrigation, use of farm machinery, transfer of technology and promoting agro-industries

Lao PDR

More than 60 percent of the work force is engaged in agriculture. According to the estimate of 1997-98, 38.6 percent of the total population were poor. Regional variation in the distribution of poverty is noticeable. It is higher in the northern and southern regions. Concentration of poverty is higher in the rural areas. In the rural areas more than 40 percent are poor compared to 26.86 percent in the urban areas.

Livelihood failure in rural areas remains to be a leading factor for poverty. The failure in turn comes from different consequences. Low per capita availability of land, mortality of livestock, poor infrastructure, poor social indicators, lack of cash, natural disasters, etc.,

feature in the causal list. Poor local level leadership and the limited public services also add to the problems.

Philippines

Out of the total population of 76.5 million in the Philippines, 51.95 percent live in rural areas while 48.05 percent live in the urban parts. The country has achieved good advancement in the field of literacy. More than 76 percent of the rural people are literate. Dependence on agriculture is still high with half of the population depending on it. According to one estimate 34 percent of the population was below the poverty line in Philippines in 2000. Concentration of poverty is higher in the rural areas. In the year 2000, more than 41 percent families suffered from poverty in the rural areas compared to 15 percent in the urban areas.

While unemployment continues to be an important factor causing poverty in the Philippines, its colonial past also laid the ground for the emergence of a recurring process of poverty. Unequal distribution of economic growth contributed to the perpetuation of the phenomenon. Inadequate attention to agriculture weakens the efforts to reduce poverty. Prolonged political crisis and corruption featured in the list of causal factors of poverty. High population growth, declining productivity, degraded natural resources and inadequate provision of services are also included in the causes of poverty.

Thailand

The total population of Thailand is 62.8 million. Of the total population, 13 percent are those who can not earn US \$1 each day. More than half of the workforce is engaged in agriculture. Poverty is a rural phenomenon in Thailand.

Environmental degradation, capitalistic expansion in the rural areas and the loss of farming land and unpredictable climatic hazards contributed to the process of impoverishment in Thailand. The vulnerability of the poor farmers has been further accentuated by low educational and lack of adequate occupational skills. It has restricted their entry into the urban job market. In the poverty cycle different factors are interrelated. Low income leads to poor education with the consequence of unemployment and indebtedness which results in further intensification of poverty.

Vietnam

The population was 80 million in 2002. Of the total population three-fourth live in the rural areas. Present population growth rate is 1.34 percent. According to the estimate of 2002 less than 30 percent of the total population live below poverty line. Poverty is a rural phenomenon in Vietnam, where 90 percent of the poor live in rural areas. In the last few years there has been significant reduction in poverty level. For example, 17.2 percent households were below poverty line in the year 2000 and it came down to 11 percent in 2003. Both in urban and rural areas poverty has been declining.

Indonesia

According to the estimate of 2002 more than 18 percent of the population or 38.4 million were poor in Indonesia. It was 40.6 million or 26.9 percent in the year 1981. Indonesia is divided into a number of small islands and the magnitude of poverty varies from island to island. Highest concentration of the poor was reported in Java with 57 percent, next is Sumatra with 21.8 percent and the rest of the islands reported 21.2 percent being poor.

A number of factors are responsible for perpetuating poverty in the Indonesian society. Macro-economic growth of the country has not been effective in reducing poverty. The policies of poverty alleviation remained centralized, being less sensitive to the specific priorities of the regional areas. The approach also remained mostly charity based. It treated the people as objects giving less attention to their choices, as some would put it.

Middle-East: Iran

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a nexus of trade and culture between East and West and covers a large market in the Middle-East. With a population of 66 million (explosive growth rate of 3.28% brought down to 1.4% between 1975 and 1985), it is a major populous country with significant achievements in social, business and investment sectors. The rural health programme have reduced infant mortality from 78 per 100 live birth in 1980 to 22.5 in 1995 and is expected to be reduced to 9 and improve life expectancy to 68.5 years. The maternal mortality of 2000 per 100,000 live birth in 1974 was brought down to 50 in 1995. In 1979, only 2500 community health centres existed in 1979, it went upto 14,600 (484%). These represent a small part of a broader national agenda for health and other social sectors. Its performance is equally good in literacy – taking a jump from 20% in 1979 to 85%, including rural areas . The number of women who are economically active has increased from 1.2 million (13.4%) in 1976 to 13.2 million (44%) in 1986, for women >15 years. Their political and economic participation has also improved.

Agriculture in recent decade has developed impressively, as in 2003., more than 62 million tons agricultural products, 14 million tons of horticultural products, 9 million tons livestock and aquatic products and a total of 85 million tons agricultural products have been produced. It is estimated that this figure rises to 112 million tons in line with the predetermined goals in the fourth development plan in 2009.

Agro-based Industry, notably food industry, are necessary and even unavoidable. Such industries can play an effective role in the following ways: (1) helping sustainable development in agriculture and achieving food security; (2) helping to reduce agricultural production losses and wastes; (3) increasing added value and productivity in agricultural sector; (4) optimal utilisation of available resources and facilities in agricultural sector; (5) helping to increase non-oil exports; (6) facilitating the access to sustainable development of villages.

To sum up briefly, the CMCs in the Asia-Pacific region are at varying stages of socio-

economic development and poverty, while a common phenomenon also varies significantly in intensity. Broad based development of the rural economy with a major thrust on agriculture and poverty alleviation is the common policy agenda in the overall national development strategies.

PART II

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

Afghanistan

In Afghanistan the key strategy for poverty alleviation is to enhance human security and promote equitable growth through poverty reduction. This is envisaged through (1) empowerment and support to the poorest and most vulnerable people in Afghanistan; (2) helping individuals, households, and communities to better manage risks by supporting sustainable rural livelihood strategies.

The National Area Based Development Programme (NABDP) provides the means to promote good local governance at the sub-national level. The programme also promotes enhanced livelihoods through the development of critical community based infrastructure and regional economic regeneration initiatives. The strategy of this programme is to (1) facilitate sub-national governance capacities at district and provincial level through the establishment of development committees and developing capacity to plan, budget and execute provincial development plans; (2) developing regional economic regeneration plans and facilitate their implementation; (3) undertake productive rural infrastructure projects based on community requests in locations not covered by national programmes or projects.

Emergency Humanitarian Response Initiatives (EHRI) is to enhance human security through support to the poorest and most vulnerable people in Afghanistan to mitigate shocks in the event of natural disasters that may affect their lives and livelihoods through direct provision of assistance to people who are unable to help themselves. The strategies of EHRI: are (1) development of an inter-ministerial early warning and preparedness system that identifies potential impact of shocks; (2) climate monitoring and forecasts (snow coverage and rainfall); (3) rapid assessment of emergencies affecting rural communities; (4) provision and coordination of assistance when people are unable to help themselves; (5) emergency needs assessments; (6) training of community development councils in disaster preparedness.

The National Surveillance System (NSS) provides the means to inform decision making and improve targeting by government and other stakeholders. The strategies of NSS are (1) provision of data to design and review policies leading to equitable targeting strategies for programmes; (2) development of an inter-ministerial early warning system that identifies the potential impact of natural and economic shocks; (3) coordination and implementation of emergency needs assessments; (4) capacity development of government staff so that they can carry out credible, timely and regular production of poverty/livelihood data and analysis; (5) advocacy on behalf of communities for increased support by the Afghan government and

the international development community.

The provision of safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation to households and communities enhances health by reducing death and diseases through waterborne diseases, thereby individuals can fully participate in robust livelihood strategies. Access to safe water and sanitation is basic human right. Thus Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (WATSAN) programmes has set up the strategies like (1) provision of basic services to all unserved rural household before developing a higher level of service. Development and delivery of basic services will be based on user demand; (2) provision of services using an integrated approach to maximise health benefits. This comprises community mobilization, health and hygiene education, water supply and sanitation; (3) construction and/or rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities to be on a cost-sharing basis; (4) through community participation in all aspects of service delivery, operation and maintenance, to ensure sustainability and promotion of best practice.

The National Rural Access Programme (NRAP), formerly called NEEP, supports enhanced livelihoods by ensuring that all rural communities are serviced by providing access to critical social and productive infrastructure and helps individuals, and community households, to manage risks through the provision of targeted employment in critical times of the year. The programme addresses both the development of quality rural access to infrastructure as well as provides a mechanism whereby temporary employment will provide a safety net for vulnerable rural people. The strategies of NRAP are (1) development of a quality rural road network that connects all villages to markets, health and education services; (2) development of maintenance regimes and methods that can be implemented by communities; (3) increasing the coverage of small-scale irrigation and hydro-electric schemes; (4) using labour intensive methods for all works and maintenance to increase employment opportunities; (5) increasing public and private sector management and delivery capacity through accompaniment and on-the-job capacity development.

Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan (MISFA) was launched by the Government of Afghanistan to take financial services to the people in rural areas where formal services are unavailable. This nascent venture aims to promote enhanced sustainable livelihoods through the provision of microfinance services in rural Afghanistan, but particularly focusing on the poor and most vulnerable, to help individuals and households better manage risks. MISFA is a multi donor wholesale financial intermediary for the sector, but as importantly, it is an advocate and a vehicle through which policy, legislative and institutional development takes place. The strategies of MISFA are (1) through the establishment and development of fully functioning, wholly Afghan-owned microfinance institutions (MFIs) that provide rural financial services and skills in basic aspects of financial management; (2) through oversight, capacity development and careful monitoring of the business plan, to facilitate the MFIs becoming fully self-sustaining over a five-year period; (3) add value to the sector through research and development of special financial products designed to meet special needs of vulnerable groups such as the disabled or Kuchi (nomads).

The National Solidarity Programme (NSP) is the primary vehicle used to build social capital by promoting good local governance thereby empowering rural communities to take control over their lives and livelihoods. Empowered rural communities collectively contribute to increased human security. The programme is inclusive and supports entire communities including the poorest and most vulnerable people. The strategies of NSP are (1) by facilitating the establishment of a framework for village level consultative decision making and representative local leadership; (2) by developing community capacity to identify, prioritise and implement development needs at the village level.

Bangladesh

The initiative for rural development dates back to the period of pre-independence of the country. A number of innovative approaches were put into practice. One of the important interventions was the development of cooperatives among the farmers. The village agricultural and industrial development (V-AID) programme initiated in 1953 was the replication of the community development approach for the comprehensive rural development of the country. The Comilla Approach earned wider acclamation for its innovative character. In the post-independence period the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) received special importance. The most innovative part was the emergence of the non-governmental organisations who took the poverty reduction efforts to the grass root level. Social mobilisation became an important tool to empower the poor. At a later stage micro-credit occupied special place to enhance the economic capacity of the poor. In the government policies important changes were reflected in a more focused attention to the issue of poverty reduction. The shift took place from the 'Third Five-Year Plan' (1985-1990). The Fourth and Fifth Five-Year Plan(1990-95) concentrated more on human resource development and generation of productive employment in the rural areas and the government and NGO collaboration. Through a wide-ranging programmes the problem of poverty is now addressed covering its different aspects. A few are the continuation of the earlier ones, while the institution like Palli Karma Shahayak Foundation is the new element. In a wider scale different ministries of the government are now engaged in different aspects of poverty alleviation.

Expenditure for the poverty reduction came from both the revenue and development budget. Allocation for poverty programmes increased in the Annual Development Programme, sector specific allocation also registered enhancement. The government had made a special allocation of US \$58.86 million to channel micro-credit through different ministries. This grant is in addition to the US \$774.01 million for the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives.

India

In the case of India poverty alleviation initiative started as a part of rural development programme and gradually assumed special focus. Three pronged approaches were followed,

namely, economic growth and increased employment, improving social services (health, education), and targeting the poor. The initial thrust was on Community Development Programme (CDP) undertaken immediately after the country's independence in late 1940s. Its emphasis was on activating community participation, building infrastructure, improving services, and promoting modern farm technology. It pursued innovative institutional mechanism dividing the entire country into 6000 blocks with the appointment of officials at the field level. Food shortage in the early 1960s pushed the government to introduce specialised programme on the promotion of Green Revolution technology, such as Intensive Agriculture Area Programme (IAAP) or the Integrated Agriculture District Programme (IADP). Although the objective of expansion of agricultural technology or the growth of agriculture was attained, everything was not satisfactory. The government had to be sensitised about the unequal distribution of benefits of Green Revolution among the different classes of the rural areas. While the Green Revolution Programme and CDP addressed the country's need in general, there were area specific programmes for the hill, drought prone area or the tribal groups. Through some programmes the needs of the disadvantaged groups such as marginal farmers or the landless groups were also catered, examples could be MFAL. The presence of Employment Programme for the poor was a further evidence of focused strategy. However, the introduction of the programme like MNP or Minimum Needs Programme in the mid 1970s reveal that the Indian government widened its attention to the improvement of different utility services to the poor to address the issue of human poverty. The meaning of poverty did not remain confined only to the shortage of food, but also lack of good health, education and others. Meanwhile other important strategic shifts took place with the designing of the programmes to avoid programme overlap and reaching the poor more directly. In early 1980s as a response to the above imperatives, Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and Food for Work came into being. In this connection District Rural Development Agency has been established. Most important shift in the new strategy is bringing the poverty reduction programme at the doorstep of the poor. In late 1980s another significant shift came in the poverty reduction strategy through handing over the responsibility of specific programme implementation to the local government bodies or the Panchayats. Panchayati Raj Institutions have been constituted at the district, village and block levels. Important programmes of rural employment or the village level supply of drinking water have been implemented by the Panchayat. Alongside the self-employment and wage – employment programmes, social protection programme such as pension for the old people was introduced. To give stronger impetus to the rural development programme separate ministry was formed in late 1970s, earlier most of the rural development programmes were introduced through the Ministry of Agriculture. The IRDP was replaced with SGSY programme and several programmes like GSY, Rural Housing for the Poor, Employment Guarantee, Decentralisation through Constitutional Amendments, etc. made the rural development programmes in India more broad-based.

The involvement of the NGOs and community-based organisations has been encouraged in poverty alleviation. Watershed Committees, Water Users Committee, Joint Forest Management Committees are few relevant examples of the above policy priorities.

In course of time the central government identified the rural sector as the priority sector and

made it a point that 60 percent of the total Plan Budget is spent in rural sector. The financial institutions are directed to allocate 40 percent of their lending to the priority sector. The budgetary allocation for rural development has increased many folds from plan to plan. Thus in Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85) the allocation for rural development programmes was Rs. 20,625 billion and increased to Rs. 328,699 billion in the Ninth Plan (1997-2002).

Indonesia

There are certain policy priorities in the poverty alleviation programmes of the Indonesian government. Three issues received particular attention, which included mainstreaming poverty alleviation programmes; increased income through the enhancement of productivity and the reduction of expenditure for the poor households. It also sought to synchronise the existing roles directed towards poverty alleviation in Indonesia. With the above priorities, efforts are made to broaden opportunities, increase capacity building of the poor along with community empowerment. Importance of social protection has also increased in the policy priority. Through synchronisation of the roles of the government, private sector and the community they are made further effective and harmonious. It is also stressed that special attention will be given to transparency, and accountability in the implementation of the poverty alleviation programmes.

Different ministries of the Indonesian government are engaged in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. In recognition of the importance of the issue recently the government has formed the Poverty Alleviation Committee. The ministries, which are engaged in the task, include Ministry of Cooperative and Small and Medium Enterprise, Ministry of Agriculture, Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Home Affairs and Regional Autonomy, and others. Besides the ministries the role of the NGOs, civil society and the private sector has been significant in poverty alleviation programmes. The major objectives of different programmes are to advance family empowerment, entrepreneurship development, providing revolving fund to strengthen saving and lending business, infrastructure development and the management of land. By virtue of different programmes necessary attempts for poverty alleviation are made. A few are the following: Presidential Instruction on Underdeveloped Villages, Supporting Infrastructure Development for Underdeveloped Villages, Urban Poverty Alleviation and the Social Safety Net. An amount of 2964,456 million rupees has been spent in the last budget for the implementation of the poverty alleviation programmes in Indonesia.

Lao PDR

It is about a decade that poverty alleviation became an important policy concern of the government. The seriousness of the government about the issue is expressed by the fact that along with the national resources, external resources have also been mobilized. In the recent times as many as eight programmes have been implemented in the field of poverty alleviation with significant results. Special committees have been set up at the province, district and village levels to expedite the implementation. In some places development funds have been raised to provide credit to the poor families. The concerns for the poverty alleviation have been articulated within the general framework of national economic

development, which enunciates the goal of moving up from the current status of least developed country to a developed one. The policy priority put stress on the decentralisation of the planning process. It also attaches importance to the design of the programmes that address the problems of specific areas. Involvement of local government has been given importance. Integrated area based natural resources management is a policy priority. Relevant ministries are made closer to cater to the needs of the villagers and the farmers. Research agencies are motivated to provide technical support to the farmers. Different sectors have been identified for intervention to impact on the poverty levels. Leading sectors include aquaculture, animal health, micro-finance, horticulture and others. Education, health and infrastructure are also targeted for intervention with regard to poverty alleviation. The investment in poverty alleviation has come through different sectors. In the recent times the government has invested more than US \$18 million a year. Of the total budget in this regard the largest part went to the economic sector followed by social and other sectors.

Myanmar

The Myanmar government employed wide-ranging approaches to reduce poverty, particularly eliminating the causal factors. It involves rural development programme, credit programme for the poor as well as agricultural credit. The government has put special emphasis on micro-credit to fight against poverty in its policy approaches. Interventions of the government are directed towards different sectors, specific areas and specific communities. Attention has been given to border areas as well as national races. It includes 'Wa' border rural area development plan, Kachin and Shan development plans. There is also dry zone greening programme. Prioritised sector includes rural water supply, livestock and fisheries sector, education and health sector, as well as transport sector. Attention has also gone to the development of irrigation and farm mechanisation. To provide safe drinking water tube well-sinking programme has been taken up. Regeneration of forest is a major component in the dry zone greening programme. In irrigation sector there has been construction of dams as well as river water pumping projects.

Different institutions and organisations are engaged in the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. Under the UNDP micro-finance project a few NGOs are implementing micro-credit programmes following the Grameen Bank model. Apart from the different micro-finance organisations there are also Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank and Livestock and Fisheries Development Bank engaged in financing the enterprises of the poor.

Pakistan

Rapid growth in agriculture, small and medium industries, housing and construction are key issues in the rural development policy framework. Promoting different social safety nets is an important basis of the policy package. Strengthening the provisions of basic needs is a prioritised area. There is need for the participation of poor in fighting poverty, which should be coupled with good monitoring methods.

In the light of the factors underlying the incidence of poverty some approaches for poverty alleviation have been formulated in Pakistan. Emphasis has been given to accelerated economic growth and the maintenance of macro-economic stability. The investment in human capital has received special attention particularly in education, health, capacity building and others. Further promotion of targeted programmes is on the agenda. The expansion of safety nets – and the improvement in governance are also part of the strategy.

A number of programmes have been implemented as a part of poverty alleviation campaign. It included the development of small and medium enterprise, undertaking public works programme, micro-finance as well as the development of agriculture, irrigation, livestock, fisheries and others. Pension for the old people and food security for the vulnerable are few other examples. For the improvement of governance, devolution of political and administrative power – has been undertaken besides fiscal decentralisation. In recognition to the importance of the anti-poverty campaign the government has increased the budgetary allocation. During the present fiscal year, the spending on the pro-poor programme will be Rs. 161 million.

Philippines

General economic growth was an important grid of the policy in combating poverty in 1960s and 1970s. In this effort the stress was on the macroeconomic measures and industrial investment. Later on emphasis was shifted to increasing employment opportunities and the promotion of social equity and justice. Agriculture received greater importance removing the neglect of traditional and labour intensive components during the Aquino administration. The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme was introduced with a stress on land redistribution. In the process of variations in policy and strategies in the Ramos administration – industrial sector received greater attention than the agricultural sector. However, at the same time Social Reform Agenda targeted 20 poorest provinces to provide the minimum basic needs. In the above Agenda an innovative programme called Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services was undertaken which emphasised on community involvement, holistic family centred needs and others. With the profiling of the Minimum Basic Needs other programmes received greater momentum. Under the Estrada administration emphasis on pro-poor agenda continued with attention to rural infrastructure, governance and macroeconomic stability. At present the government is implementing Medium –Term 1 Philippines Development Plan. In this strategy special attention has been given to the needs of the vulnerable sections as well as the advancement of social equity through agrarian reform. Agrarian Reform Community Development Project or ARCDP is an example of the above kind. Widening the coverage, municipal population also got included. Other measures included social infrastructure and local capacity building. Basic social services system development remained a part of it.

Sri Lanka

The poverty alleviation programmes in Sri Lanka are both elaborate and innovative. The policies and programmes of Sri Lanka could be broadly classified into two broad categories:

(1) Social Welfare Programme; (b) Government Sponsored Rural Development Programme. The government recognized the importance of the interaction of the above two processes in achieving the desired objectives of self-sustained rural development. The governmental deliveries took two important forms: (1) improvement of physical infrastructures such as roads, irrigation schemes, market places, post offices, community centres, schools, health centres and rural schemes; (2) provision of physical inputs and services to individual households, subsidized agro-inputs, allocation of government owned land to landless, credit, cash subsidies for planting certain crops and agricultural extension services.

Successive governments introduced progressive administrative reforms to decentralise the administration and decision making power; such as, in the form of the appointment of a District Political Authority and the introduction of a Decentralised Budget in 1973, the creation of the District Ministry System and District Development Council System after 1978 and the establishment of the Pradeshiya Sabha system in 1987, so as to secure greater people's participation in the national development effort. An attempt was also made to bring about a reorientation in the bureaucracy to meet the requirements of participatory rural development.

The Government also introduced new village level organisations for rural development. They are Cooperative Societies, Rural Development Societies and Gramodaya Mandala. Most of the NGOs have been engaged in delivery oriented relief rehabilitation activities or religious, educational and social service activities. It was only in the recent decades that the NGOs have taken initiatives to mobilise rural masses or self-reliant development work.

There are various rural development programmes in Sri Lanka. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), village re-wakening movement based on Housing Development, The Gam Udawa (village reawakening) Movement, Swarna Bhoomi (Land Grants), The Maha Pola Concept and the Rural Scholarship Fund, The Janasaviya (Samurdhi) programme and Ten Thousand Tanks Programme are major rural development programmes. Major objectives of the IRDPs are to strengthen the pace of rural development by the process of greater allocation of resources to the rural sector. The system of decentralised planning aims to achieve increased employment, incomes and better living standards for the rural population. The Village Re-Awakening Movement based on Housing Development and popularly known as the Udagama Movement has taken firm roots in the country as a national movement. The entire programme is based on the concept that housing is essential for social and economic development.

The analysis of anti-poverty programmes in Sri Lanka reveals that most of the programmes do not focus specially on the rural poor. There are two programmes based on the methodology of participatory rural development evolved and developed on concrete experience under research project namely, (1) the change agent's programme; (b) programme of a non-governmental organisation, the Participatory Institute for Development alternatives. The new approach to development is targeted to be based on people, especially the poor. Sarvodaya Shramadana is a well known example of a non-governmental voluntary organisation that is actively involved in the field of rural development. In rural Sri

Lanka there are local leaders like the Buddhist priests, village teachers, native physicians etc. to perform the job.

The ram Udawa (Village Re-Awakening) Movement, which was initiated in 1978, was one of the major settlement schemes in the country. The idea of picking the remotest villages and settling the poorest people in a much more congenial environment – economically, socially, culturally in a model village has spread to all parts of the country.

A model village is normally designed to have twenty to sixty houses; every such model village is a self-contained village. The village is given the basic facilities so that people can earn a living by residing in the village itself. In order to encourage the principles of self-help and self-reliance, the support of the villagers is enlisted in the construction of houses and other communal activities such as constructing a playground. Helping the villagers to help themselves is one of the basic objectives of the programme. It also seeks to generate employment at the village level by increasing production of both agriculture and small-scale industrial goods.

Swarna Bhoomi/Jaya Bhoomi (Land Grants): During the British occupation, the rural inhabitants lost their lands; because the government was interested in opening up plantations like tea and rubber to sustain the economy. As a result it creates landless peasantry in the country. The Land Grants movement seeks to confer permanent land title to over a million landless farmers in rural Sri Lanka, and thus usher a free and independent peasant community. The basic principle underlying this movement is to provide encouragement to make their land more productive and optimise the return. The issue of permanent titles to their lands would allow them to obtain loans from banks and other lending institutions by pledging the property as security.

The Mahapola Concept and the Rural Scholarship Fund: A rural market is a place where the village farmers and the consumers gather to buy or sell vegetables, rice, tobacco, kitchen utensil and a host of other sundries. From the point of view of the rural economy, the importance of the market lies in the fact that it is primarily a marketing outlet for small craftsman and farmers. Prices are determined to a great extent of bargaining. There is a high degree of social interaction among the sellers even though they are competing for business, for most of them hail from the same village and are related to one another.

An innovative approach which is coming to grip with the problems of rural marketing has been the establishment of Mahapola (trade fairs). The Government in 1980 started this new venture. The government seeks to achieve the following objectives; to sell available goods in the rural areas at prices prevalent in Colombo and other major cities. The Mahapola is a successful innovation, which carried benefits to the rural areas. Under the Mahapola Higher Education Scholarship trust fund, an award of scholarships is made annually. The aims and the objectives of the fund are: to provide higher education facilities to youth, to provide assistance to deserving youth to help them complete their academic, industrial or technical education in an institution of higher education, to set up and assist schools and other institutions.

Janasaviya and Samurdhi Programme: This programme is a countrywide and system-wise, response, policy-wise and programme-wise, to the fundamental problems afflicting the Sri Lankan social, political and economic order. The cluster of problems, inter alia includes poverty, malnutrition, lack of basic needs, lack of equity, unemployment and underemployment, ideological and cultural dis-orientation, landless and alienation. As a result, the waste of potentially productive human and other resources is immense. Considering human population to be the most valuable resource this programme aims to help the poor build up their latent capacities and their asset-base, through productive employment. This programme pivots round the poor family. The poor are at the centre of their own development process.

Rural development policies in Sri Lanka are emerging with a new face. Past experiences and lessons have been very helpful in promoting rural development by the adoption of new agricultural technologies and also in directing the focus of programmes towards alleviation of poverty in rural areas. New commitments in government policies for rural development emphasize a package of programmes with human resource development, which are designed to upgrade the quality of life in rural areas. Increasing urbanisation and developmental protection are two new dimensions, which receive attention in developing sustainable policies for rural development.

Thailand

In the programmes addressing poverty in Thailand special attention has been given to natural resource management. The focus is on sustainable and efficient use of the natural resources, with the involvement of local management, imposing fine on the polluters and allocating land for the system improvement. In this regard environment friendly use of the natural resources is a policy priority along with land reform. Efforts have been made also for the human resource management by providing basic education, undertaking community learning. Twelve year long public education without any charge has been introduced. To improve the economic base of the poor farmers moratorium on loan repayment has been introduced. Village fund and people's fund programmes have also been introduced. Measures have been taken to improve competitiveness of the farmers through innovative technology that would reduce the cost of production. About seven hundred central agricultural markets has been established. Another important programme is the Asset Conversion Scheme. Leased asset of the poor could be used for obtaining loans or financial services.

Vietnam

Specific priorities mark the policy package related to poverty alleviation in Vietnam. The conditions that determine comfortable level of living are the focus of intervention that include health, education, accommodation and others. Providing loan to the poor is a priority. Target oriented programme for the poor, construction of basic infrastructure in poor communes, promotion of non-farm work, settling the immigrants in new economic zones are important cornerstones of the policies. Typical areas such as highlands, coastal

areas, islands are focused in the priority policies. The primary responsibility of the formulation of the poverty alleviation programmes is with the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs. In 1996 with the integration of different programmes the Hunger Elimination and Poverty Reduction Programme came into being. Other ministries such as the Planning, Finance, Agriculture and Rural Development, Health, Education as well as the State Bank of Vietnam are engaged in different responsibilities. A very high-powered National Programme Steering Committee has been formed. For effective implementation the Provincial People's Committee plays an important role. Other important programmes include Targeted Employment Generation, Reforestation, Programme for the Disadvantaged Communes. For different poverty reduction programmes at the national level the government spent VND 21,000 billion during 1992 when first poverty reduction programme was commenced. It rose to VND 9600 billion in the years 1999 and 2000.

Iran

Through making significant investments rural development over the past 25 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has played a role in the reduction of inequalities that exist between cities and villages and now the necessity of focusing on the economy and production in the villages is more evident than ever.

As an example Rural Employment Development Soft Loan fund (REDSLF) was established in 2002 with the goal of meeting the credit requirements of the rural people (men and women) who seek employment for the purpose of rural development. The fund played a more important role by the provision of the initial capital from the grants-in-aid and presentation of successful performance that caused significant satisfaction among the rural populace. The fund's approaches can be summarized as follows: (1) creating of employment in the rural areas, especially in less developed areas as well as integrated rural development; (2) special focus on active rural youth; technical and financial assistance of the fund for rural employment; (4) coordinating with related organisations for the provision of technical and training services to employment applicants; (5) giving priority to unemployed graduates in rural areas; (6) making easy access of the rural poor to inexpensive financial resources for rural development and employment; (7) motivating the rural people for investment on various grounds of rural economy and employment development; (8) assisting the development and stabilization of available rural employments and rise in the rural income level; (9) assisting the decrease of villagers' migration to cities and motivating to reverse the trend of this migration (i.e. from urban spaces to rural ones).

The fund have taken 750 villages under its financial and credit services coverage by the end of 2005 with a credit amounting to Rls. 335 billion (US \$37 million) through the grant-in-aid and 8000 individuals have already received low cost facilities for the creation, development, and stabilisation of employment by absorbing credits totally amounting to Rls. 215 billion (US \$24 million). The remaining credit is under administrative follow-up and expert studies. The banking interest for this loan is 4.5%. 1328 projects in 30 provinces of the country has been under field study and monitoring, of which 910 projects (68%) are active, 25 projects (2%) ready for operation, 164 (12%) are under process, while 115 (9%) partially active, and 14

(9%) unexecuted and under follow-up.

The short account of the poverty alleviation approaches and experiments currently being conducted in the CMCs provided in this section is quite rich and instructive for adoption of effective RD and PA efforts in the CMCs. Through inter-country coordination of these policy approaches and institutional arrangements for replication of the efforts at the regional level through CIRDAP initiatives.

PART III

FUTURE COURSE OF ACTIONS

Bangladesh

Towards the objective of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the government has attached high priority to remove the incidence of poverty in a span of few years. With this objective an Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper has been prepared aiming at economic growth, social development and poverty reduction. Important paradigmatic shift in this regard is the notion of social development which is now a part of poverty reduction. In line with this priority important social parameters are incorporated in the campaign to remove gender discrimination, child mortality and the natural disaster. Poverty reduction through pro-poor growth, human development and sustainable rural development is now at the centre stage of the national development strategy adopted in the recently finalised PRSP document.

India

The Government of India took various steps for economic reforms with human face so that globalisation of the economy does not adversely affect the poor. The future goals are set in the light of the Tenth Five-Year plan. As per the plan the percentage of the poor will be reduced by 15 percentage points by 2012. All children will complete their schooling by the year 2007. Gender gap in literacy will be reduced and the literacy rate will be increased to 75 percent. Similar progressive goals have also been set up with regard to infant mortality, providing drinking water and others.

Indonesia

Indonesian government has laid special emphasis on poverty alleviation and to that end established a Poverty Alleviation Committee appointing the Minister a Coordinator for Economic Affairs as the Vice-Chairman. The main task of the committee is to reduce poverty (i) by decreasing poor people's expenditure burden and (ii) increasing poor people's income or buying capacity. It will be taken care in the future that both the state and regional budget are utilised at the optimum level. Further synchronisation is stressed to reduce the gap between planning, setting objectives and implementation. Direct programme monitoring

will be there, besides the greater involvement of the NGOs, academia, civil society and others. There will be further improvements in the operations of micro, small and medium credit provisions by banks and other financial institutions. The practice of the normative levels in the existing poverty alleviation will be enhanced incorporating the elements of transparency, accountability, democratisation and participation.

Lao PDR

During 2003 the government organised a national conference on poverty eradication. It was decided in the conference that by 2005 poverty would be eradicated from 10 poorest districts and by 2010 from another 47 districts. It will engage macro-economic reform as well as sector specific intervention such as health, communication and infrastructure. At the micro level, family will be the focus of intervention and at the macro level it will be the district. Other priorities will include shifting cultivation, opium eradication, and rural development and commodity goods production.

Myanmar

The strategic importance of the micro-finance organisations will get further boost up in the near future in the strategy of the Myanmar government. It will encourage further intensification of the support in different social sectors. For example, greening project will be expanded in thirteen districts from the present level of eight-districts. Attacking poverty in a multi-pronged manner will keep on to continue.

Pakistan

In the future further impetus will be given to the strategies presently pursued. The preferred areas include micro-credit and social security campaign. Budgetary allocation will also further increase. It will witness increase in rural development expenditure, human development expenditure and other vital sectors.

Philippines

Giving emphasis to economic growth and poverty reduction will continue. Household level welfare and redistribution norm will also receive equal attention. Other normative goals such as enhancing self-esteem and the freedom from servitude will remain important cornerstones along with increasing life-sustenance. External factors such as globalisation and environmental issues will be integrated in the given initiative. Reducing regional disparity is another goal. NGOs involvement will be encouraged and importance will be attached to the increase of people's power.

Thailand

The government of Thailand seeks to continue the policy of environmental conservation to address the issue of poverty alleviation. Related with it is enforcing control over the irrational capitalist exploitation. It also seeks to strongly continue the programme of

providing rights to the poor over the asset stipulated in the Asset Conversion Scheme.

Vietnam

The concentration of the poor is in the geographically remote areas and difficult for reaching. Therefore poor communication infrastructure remains an important obstacle to conduct any programme with the objective of alleviating poverty. The poor people of these areas are also exposed to different types of vulnerability. Macroeconomic changes will feature importantly in the future policies along with structural modification in order to increase employment opportunities as well as reducing vulnerability. In the policy objectives there are other priorities such as providing credit, health care and other human well being parameters. It is also there that different mass organisations will be encouraged to contribute their efforts to the poverty alleviation programmes. The establishment of small and medium enterprises is projected as a future intervention tool.

Part IV

Major Findings of Rural Development 2005

Keeping in view the paradigm shifts in the national development policies and strategies of the CMCs, the synthesized Rural Development Report 2005, focused on the contemporary issues that have significant bearing on the achievement of national growth targets and MDGs. Some of the major findings of the important issues discussed and analysed are briefly highlighted.

Disparities in GDP Growth

Fourteen CIRDAP member countries account for a total population of about 2.04 billion and cover an area of 11 million Sq. Km. India, Indonesia and Iran account for about 61 per cent of the land area about 66 percent of the rural population and if Pakistan and Vietnam are added to this list the number of rural population goes up to 85.7 per cent. However, per capita GDP is relatively high in Iran, Malaysia and Thailand and relatively low in Nepal, Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Vietnam and India. Thus several distortions in economic and social indicators are seen in the growth pattern of rural areas (the highest per capita GDP of US \$3905 in Malaysia, as compared to lowest per capita GDP of US \$230 in Nepal during the year 2002). These disparities can be directly related to rural-led economic growth strategies pursued by some countries.

Population Pressure and Factor Movements

Another characteristic of development is related to growing urbanization due to factor movements – particularly population migration, and the size of population. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is projected to have a population of 1.80 billion by 2005 (1/3 of world population) and their youth population (>18) would be around 40 percent, meaning job

creation is to be on the top of the agenda in non-farm/service activities, as the youth generally avoid farm-based incomes/employment and other traditional activities. In a few CIRDAP member countries, there is a radical transformation, like that of Malaysia moving close to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and poverty reduced to the minimum and India with its great economy booming, but yet poverty and prosperity moving like twins.

Economic Dualism

Asia as a whole is regarded as a powerhouse of development, some economies growing at more than 9 percent, while in others it is 4-5 percent. Some of the fastest growing economies (like India) have contributed to the emergence of a middle class, that brought a revolution in certain sectors like IT, Biotechnology, and infrastructure for expanded markets and the globalisation process. Some countries are yet to derive the benefits of these knowledge revolution calling for regional cooperation in technology transfer, bilateral and multilateral trade and diversification of economic opportunities. However, growth alone factor proved to be ineffective in down sizing the numbers of rural poor and their access to economic factors of production, social amenities and cultural improvements. Poverty thus is a major policy product in a number of countries, in the region.

Governance Problem

Governance issues are directly related to human development to promote eco-systems for wealth creation, to reduce transaction costs for the poor, to help develop choices with private sector participation, to make programme/project implementation effective, without any leakages, and to promote self-governance and local governance capabilities. Governance problems are echoed in every forum in Bangladesh, as public and private investment is said to be stagnant at 23 percent of GDP for almost 9 years or so.

To enhance participation of the poor in local decision making, decentralization of power, function and funds to local institutions is discussed and debated. In spite of good intentions, the desired benefits could not be drawn in some countries. It is noted in the case of Bangladesh that local taxes and non-tax revenues can hardly finance the local government expenditure and no effort to build up accountability of local governments to their wards. In India, the local bureaucracy is still dominant and attempts are slow and institutional linkages are suggested to be weak. Indonesia, under the new economic system, is working hard towards rural community development and Lao PDR is working on "centers for change and learning" through empowering district and local institutions. Malaysia and Indonesia are generally macro oriented, with centralized authorities. Myanmar is at the evolving stage for a constitution and in Nepal the local institutions are playing only a supplementary role. Philippines is considered politically decentralized, with of course a diminishing local autonomy. In Thailand the local governments suffer from low levels of people's participation. There are several key issues that need to be addressed to in the management of decentralization policies.

Human Development

Another dimension of development related to the above is the Human Development Characteristics of CIRDAP member countries. South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific account for 524 (63 percent) million under-nourished out of 831 million in the world. The development and under-development that characterizes South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) can be seen in other Human Development indicators. Four million children (compared to 1 million in EAP) under age 5 are dying each year, 32 million not going to school at the primary level (compared to 14 million in EAP) and about 100 million without access to sanitation and more than 6 times of this figure are without access to safe drinking water. At the disaggregated level, the figures reveal how much of rural development and poverty alleviation efforts are needed to tackle this problem of social (HRD) and economic deprivation. A human misery index (otherwise called the key indicators of social development in Table-7, page 14 in the RDR) would call for drastic measures and related huge investments in some countries. For example, Nepal has high figures for accessibility to improved sanitation, maternal mortality rates, under 5 mortality, life expectancy at birth, etc. The same applies to Afghanistan, specially for maternal mortality, under five mortality, life expectancy at birth, gender issues, etc. Though there is a progressive improvement in the Human Development Index, the variations in between the countries is still a matter of concern.

Agriculture alone is not enough

With the given growth rates, development and distributional aspects between countries and sectors, regional variations within the countries, etc., some countries are still at the periphery of industrial growth and only agriculture dominates. Its contribution to national GDP varied from 9 to 58 percent in CIRDAP countries. The share of economically active population in agriculture in some countries is still high with 79 percent in Nepal, 63 percent in Myanmar, 67 percent in India, 63 percent in Bangladesh and 69 percent in Vietnam (Table 9, RDR). The prevalence of small farm characterizes South Asian agriculture and high agricultural population density in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Impressive gains in agricultural production index are seen in Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The MDGs, as set by the world community, is particularly relevant to many countries of Asia – as they link up poverty, and human deprivation with the necessity for faster development and improved social sector services. Some would argue that universal literacy is a key element of poverty alleviation strategy (UNDP, 1996). Number of adult illiterates for example is as high as 273 million in India and 50.3 million in Pakistan (2002), out of 431 million in CIRDAP members (UNDP, HDR). A study in Bangladesh (BIDS) substantiates the argument that households with illiterate heads fell only from 40 to 32 percent (90-94), where as households with heads who have primary school education declined from 37 to 17 percent during this period (UNDP, 1996). Literacy and education thus play a determinant role in the household income.

The countries in the region, specially Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Lao PDR, Nepal, and Pakistan have to go a long way in removing female illiteracy where it is very high. In some countries it is more than 70 percent. Public expenditure on education as part of GNP is very minimal in some countries (Table 23 in the report). Some countries like Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines have invested more resources in education. There is thus a need for introspection, as human resource development becomes central to achieving the MDGs.

The expenditure on health and the availability of physicians again presents a dismal picture. This has a direct bearing on the poor, especially women and children. Investments that are related to better nutrition, better health care and better environment have to be given top priority, to achieve millennium development goals. Poverty also damages the environment and thus regional cooperation is envisaged.

New Initiatives in Farm Growth

Dry land development, agro-forestry, watershed development with people's participation need major policy and institutional push in some countries, where the potential is high. As the per capita availability of arable land is diminishing over a period, crop intensity and crop productivity and crop diversification (including mixed farming, integrated agricultural practices) surplus labour movements to non-farm activity are to be addressed in national policies with farmer (as apposed to farm) at the central stage of decision-making. Thus some countries like India, Malaysia, etc. have achieved success through integrated watershed approaches (India). Developing rural areas as new centers of economic activity (Malaysia), irrigation facility for double cropping, FELDA's new land development activity, diversification of agriculture (oil palm), substantial allocations rural infrastructure etc. in Malaysia have added new dimensions to rural development.

Most of CIRDAP member countries fall in low income category (except Malaysia) and a few are in the category of lower middle income countries (Indonesia, Iran, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand). Except in Malaysia and Iran, population active in agriculture is dominant (table 12, page 37) and thus technological interventions are necessary and a second green revolution is envisaged. This requires application of bio-technology (without microbial hazards), reinventing the concept of bio-villages, green house methods and a host of area-specific interventions. In the context of economic reforms, there is a vast scope to make farmer centred policies a part of the reform process, for home consumption and export trade.

Off-Farm and Non-Farm Potentialities

Land is only one part of rural household economy. It has direct linkages to livestock, offering opportunities to off-farm incomes and employment. This is an important activity for landless poor and near landless in some countries, where the potential is sky-high. Particularly, women are involved in animal rearing, milking and marketing of dairy products.

It was estimated that livestock sector contributes 8 to 15 percent of GDP in the region, integrated livestock systems with animal health, credit, marketing, etc. are yet to take shape. However, there are some best examples available in the region, for replication and multiplication.

Forest Resources

Likewise forest account for 17 percent of world resources, in Asia and Pacific. Due to excessive deforestation, the per capita availability is getting reduced. They are a major source of livelihood for food, fuel and fodder for poor indigenous communities. The forest loss is increasing in some countries like Indonesia and Lao PDR. The practices like slash and burn cultivation and rapid commercial harvesting of forests are a growing concern in some regions. It is said that between 1990 and 1995, Indonesia alone lost an estimated 54,220 sq. km. of tropical forest, with an annual rate of deforestation accounting to 1.2 percent. Likewise illegal logging and smuggling of timber remain widespread in Lao PDR. Both India and Philippines have less than one quarter of their original forest cover. Though Myanmar has 52 percent forest coverage, and rich in teak and natural rubber, the deforestation rate is estimated at 1.59 percent. Nepal has lost 50 percent of its forests. These are examples to say that environmental regeneration and protecting the forest wealth is a matter of concern. Thailand instituted a ban on commercial logging in 1989. Indonesia clamped a high export tax in 1992. There are however, countries still where environmental consciousness should be embedded in national policies.

Marine Resources

Fishing is a major livelihood project for the poor near the sea side and inlands. Small scale fishing is widespread and in some areas pisciculture is also widespread. Marine fisheries are important in Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia. The pollution and depletion of fish have reduced its production in some areas of Philippines. The natural resource management issues are coming to the forefront in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, etc. The FAO reports indicate that nearly 75 percent of world's major marine fisheries are either over-exploited or fully exploited, but at the same time the per capita fish consumption is expected to increase (from 16 Kg to 21 Kg by 2030). The fact remains that for food security, poverty alleviation and improved local livelihoods and in the global fight on malnutrition, aquaculture is regarded as an important weapon.

Market Potential

The countries which have achieved self-sufficiency in food grains have still lot of potential, for producing more and to cater to export markets and agriculture still holds the key for rural development. As the share of developing countries in the world market is still low with 13 percent as compared to 23 percent of industrialized countries, it is argued that increasing openness to trade with the outside world is a key ingredient in maximizing gains from regional trade agreements. In CIRDAP member countries, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand

have shown notable trade performance. What is important is to devise the right combination of policies which would promote higher growth and food security for the poor households.

Gender Dimension of Poverty

Half of the population in CMCs are women. Out of 1.3 billion poor in the world nearly two-third are in Asia. , As women face hardships in poor households consequently children are affected, the cycle of poverty repeats. The girl child is discriminated in terms of education, health care and abuse. It is estimated that out of 130 million children without access to primary school, 62 percent were girls. Motherhood at the young age of 15-19, is estimated to be in the order of 15 million girls, resulting in higher morbidity and mortality. Child labour is also rampant. Though gender concerns are getting into policy, specific plans for mainstreaming women have been taken up not uniformly in the region except Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand.

MDG Plus

The management of poverty reduction strategy is not just achieving MDGs alone but by stressing on MDG plus as Thailand has shown. Its number of poor dropped from 15.3 million to 6.2 million by 2000 (5.2 percent) much ahead of the MDG target year. Its target is to reduce poverty to 4 percent by 2009. Though there are large variations in countries in moving on the road to achieve MDG, major concern is the regional concentration in Bali, Aceh, Malaka and Papua in Indonesia; Mindanao in Philippines, Northwest region of Thailand, etc. to quote a few examples. In South Asia, the rate of decrease of poverty, except in India, is a matter of concern in achieving the MDGs.

To achieve MDGs targets by 2015, a strategic policy framework was suggested that includes – pro-poor policy in macro terms, credit support, rural infrastructure, empowering programmes for women, development of indigenous communities, and building sustainable institutions for the poor.

Information Technology

Several countries in the region are investing resources on IT, as a knowledge based industry. However the digital divide between urban and rural areas is a case in point for the protagonists of rural development. It is well recognized however that IT has a major role to play in various fields – rural education, medicine, agriculture, marketing, etc. Most importantly its potential for good governance is stressed, to avoid corruption and speedy delivery of services. Some of the CMCs have shown that IT has potential role to play in land record management, government citizen interface, rural marketing etc. and the information revolution that is occurring in some parts of Asia has to become more broad-based. Malaysia and India have emerged as major players.

Energy Resources

The infrastructural bottleneck in IT is in the energy sector, though energy sector is the prime mover of development in the rural areas. The traditional energy systems remain high in the rural areas. Alternative energy sources – by using wind power, solar power, have high potentials, which should be tackled.

Water – Irrigation – Energy Nexus

There is a visible nexus between water – energy – irrigation and if these are addressed, several problems in the rural area can be encountered. The water and energy needs of agriculture are the most prominent in some countries. Subsidisation has threatened the financial viability of the power sector in some countries. Several water saving technologies for irrigation management have come into force, but public awareness programmes in CMCs may contribute significantly to conserve water and energy resources. Safe drinking water is a concern in some countries.

Regional Intervention

There are important regional organizations in Asia – ASEAN, SAARC, etc. and agreements like SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area), SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement), apart from bilateral agreements on particular issues. But adequate cooperation between organizations and countries involved is still to be achieved.

PART V

Emerging Trends and the Common Perspective

In spite of various poverty alleviation efforts, significant sections of the population in different CIRDAP member countries (CMCs) are still suffering from acute poverty. In most countries, poverty is predominantly a rural phenomenon and a large population live in the rural areas. In varying scale, in all countries reported in this volume poverty is on decrease except occasional vicissitudes.

Limited employment opportunities and poor skill and educational level are the macro-factors underlying low economic performance. In the context of social structure resource inequality is reported commonly. Environmental degradation and unplanned exploitation of resources for the market are also included. A few country papers shed light on political turmoil and corruption.

At the level of policy, certain common factors have also emerged. Macro-economic stability and economic growth received priority along with targeted programmes for poverty alleviation. As an issue, poverty alleviation remained a part of rural development and gradually occupied the central place in the development agenda. According top priority to this issue is a common policy approach in all the countries. In each country different

ministries are engaged in it, and the involvement of the NGOs is also an emerging trend. Notion of poverty is not confined to economic deprivation, social deprivation is also adequately echoed. A variety of interventions is understood to be in place to create enabling environment with an increased emphasis on rural-finance and other developmental inputs, including social and economic architecture. But a lot remains to be done to alleviate poverty, improve distribution of income, achieve human development and raise productivity to improve economic and social well-being especially of the rural poor in many of the CMCs. Judicious policy intervention for attending faster, sustainable and equitable economic and social development is thus called for. CIRDAP is to play a very important coordinating role in the process through effective networking among the CMCs relating to RD and PA processes pursued by these countries. This theme is prominently highlighted in the two subsequent papers presented and discussed in the regional dialogue.

II. EMERGING ISSUES CONCERNING RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION AND THE ROLE OF CIRDAP

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I. Setting the Scene: Relevant Background Information on the CMCs

The focus of this paper is the 14 CIRDAP Member Countries (CMCs), which are: Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Iran, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan, listed in order of the 2003 Human Development Index (HDI) ranking of the countries. All these countries (except Afghanistan for which the HDI is not available) belong to the medium human development category, which include, as of 2003, 88 countries. The category includes all the countries with the HDI value between 0.500 to 0.800. The CMCs range across the whole spectrum. However, the South Asian CMCs belong to the bottom quarter of the category, while the East Asian CMCs generally belong to the upper half, with Malaysia almost at the top of the category. (Table 1)

The CMCs account for 32 per cent of the world population and 40 per cent of the total population of the developing countries. Of the rural population, the CMCs account for 41.8 per cent of the world total and 46.4 per cent of the total population of the developing countries. However, the CMCs account for only 4 per cent of the world GDP and 21 per cent of the total DGP of the developing countries. Per capita average GDP in the CMCs is only 13 per cent of the average per capita global GDP and 53 per cent of the average per capita GDP in the developing countries. (Table1). Obviously, the CMCs are in a disadvantageous position in relation to both income and population size.

In so far as poverty is concerned, the CMCs, except for Thailand and Malaysia, exhibit poverty ratios between a quarter and over half of the population. Also, undernourishment is significant in most of the CMCs, except Malaysia, Iran, Indonesia, and Myanmar. Similarly, there are significant gaps in most of the countries in relation to children underweight for age, infant mortality, under-five mortality, and maternal mortality. The income distribution is also highly skewed, with the Gini coefficient ranging from 0.318 to 0.498. However, the relatively richer countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Iran, and the Philippines exhibit a significantly larger income or consumption disparity compared to the other CMCs where per capita income is much lower. (Table 2)

In terms of adult literacy, the South Asian CMCs are much behind the South East and East Asian CMCs. This is also true in relation to net secondary enrollment, children reaching grade five, and the proportion of tertiary students in science and technology. However, in terms of primary enrollment, except for Pakistan and Nepal, the CMCs have achieved between 84 and 94 per cent. There is also a wide variation among the CMCs in public expenditure on education, which ranges from 1.2 per cent of GDP in Indonesia to 8.1 per cent of GDP in Malaysia and Sri Lanka. In terms of the percentage of the total government expenditure, the CMCs, except for Pakistan (7.8%), Indonesia (9%), and Lao PDR (11%), the allocation ranges from about 15 per cent to 20 per cent generally, while it is as high as 28 per cent in Thailand. The proportion of public expenditure spent on primary education ranges from 32 per cent (in Malaysia) to 62 per cent (in Nepal). The other countries generally spend between a quarter and a half on primary education. Secondary education is also emphasized in most CMCs, which receives between one-fifth and close to half of the total expenditure on education. (Tables 3 and 4).

Health sector remains largely neglected, which generally receives between one and two per cent of GDP, while it is but about 3 per cent in Thailand and Iran but as low as 0.4 per cent in Myanmar. In so far as access to improved sanitation is concerned, some countries have done very well, while others have done rather poorly. The latter include Lao PDR, Nepal, India, Vietnam, and Bangladesh. The CMCs have generally done quite well in relation to sustainable access of the population to an improved water source. While the proportion of the population receiving this service is low in Lao PDR (43 per cent), the other CMCs have achieved a level ranging from 73 per cent to 95 per cent. However, in respect of both water and sanitation, there are problems in most CMCs, arising as a result of increase in population, pollution caused by industrialization, overuse of some of the water sources including aquifers, and continuing exclusion of segments of population from equitable access to these facilities. (Table 4 and 5)

II. Why is it Important to Focus on Rural Development?

About 67 per cent of the total population of the CMCs is rural. The proportion ranges from 36 per cent in Malaysia to 85 per cent in Nepal. (Table 1). On the other hand, the urban expansion in many of the CMCs has not been so much as a result of planned urbanization. A major reason for the urban expansion has been rural to urban migration, inspired by both push and pull factors. In fact, the urban expansion has often been rather unplanned giving rise to severe stresses on urban services such as electricity, transportation, education, health, water supply, etc. One, therefore, finds squalours involving large numbers of people around or in places within urban centres. Rural development is, therefore, essential in order to enable the rural population to improve their living conditions, which will also discourage rural to urban migration, thereby facilitating planned urban development.

Indeed, development efforts must focus on all segments of population, particularly the poorer segments, regardless of where they live and what their circumstances are; otherwise cohesive national development is not possible as there is interdependence among rural and urban areas as well as among various segments of society. However, it is possible to identify the critical aspects, which need to be addressed in the rural areas as opposed to the urban areas and also the particular needs of the rural poor needing priority attention. Rural development is, therefore, seen as part of national development, focusing on the particular needs of the population residing in rural areas, but also keeping the linkages with urban areas in perspective.

III. Pertinent Global Frameworks

The currently ruling framework for pursuing poverty alleviation and national development in the developing countries revolves around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were adopted by the United Nations in pursuance of the Millennium Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit in 2000. There are eight MDGs and 18 Targets (Annex 1). The progress achieved during the past five years in respect of these goals and the targets set under them have been reviewed at the UN World Summit held in New York during 14-16

September last. The individual countries have committed to pursue these goals and reported to the Summit on their achievements and the problems they face in making progress. The main focus of the MDG package is on the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger by 50 per cent by 2015 compared to 1990. The other goals have to do with education, health, gender equity, environmental sustainability, and establishment of partnership for development. Within the framework of the MDGs, the rural development efforts may focus on human capability development of both males and females in terms of education and health, and create opportunities for them to increase their income and improve their living conditions. Obviously, efforts are needed to protect and enhance the environmental base so that economic activities can be expanded. At the same time, partnerships within the rural areas, within countries, and internationally need to be forged involving appropriate actors towards facilitating the required action programmes to be formulated and implemented.

However, at least two other major frameworks in place need to be recognized in this context. One is the sustainable development paradigm. This was initiated in 1972 Stockholm Conference on Human Environment, further elaborated by the Brundtland Commission, which issued its report, *Our Common Future*, in 1986. The 1992 UN Earth Summit held in Rio in Brazil generated the commitment of the UN member countries to pursuing sustainable development. The concept was defined in Agenda 21 adopted in that Summit as consisting of economic growth, social development (poverty reduction, promotion of equity and inclusion, building of institutions, etc.), and environmental protection, with the human being placed at the centre of the stage. The progress achieved was duly reviewed in Rio+5 1997 UN General Assembly and then in the World Conference on Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg. Commitments were renewed by the developing countries to strengthen policies and programmes and introduce institutional reforms, as required, towards the pursuit of sustainable development, while the developed countries reaffirmed their promise to provide financial and technological assistance to enable them to achieve sustainable development. Obviously, in an interdependent world, sustainable development would involve the global community as a whole so that a harmonious global progress could be achieved, with the disparity among nations and among various segments of society within nations brought down to tolerable levels.

Despite many conferences, many discussions, many reports, and many speeches at local, national, regional, and international levels and many negotiations between the developing and the developed countries over the years, there is now virtually nothing to show in terms of progress towards sustainable development. Neither the promised financial and technological assistance from the developed countries has come through nor have the developed countries fulfilled their commitment to reducing greenhouse gases. In fact, the USA, the largest contributor to the emission of the greenhouse gases, has pulled out of the Kyoto Protocol, which was designed to address the issue of reduction of greenhouse gas emission. Also, the developing countries have not produced the necessary policies, programmes, and institutions to deal with the issues of sustainable development, but not infrequently due to the promised assistance not forthcoming from the international community. Clearly, therefore, the sustainable development paradigm, which was spearheaded by the United Nations is now virtually in hibernation. It may, in fact, even be

further neglected now that the focus has shifted to the MDGs. But, without progress in terms of sustainable development as defined earlier, there is very little chance of achieving much in relation to (a) inclusive development and empowerment of the poor to enable them to break out of the poverty syndrome and improve their living conditions and (b) keeping the Earth in a healthy condition to support the present and future generations.

The other process that has to be recognized is that of free markets and globalization. This was initiated in the 1970s in terms of the neo-liberalism-inspired Washington Consensus formulated by the World Bank and the IMF. In pursuance of this paradigm, the developing countries were called upon to privatize, deregulate, and globalize. Otherwise, no official development assistance (ODA) would be provided. This paradigm is now thriving, forged ahead by the multinational and transnational companies (MNCs and TNCs) and facilitated by the unprecedented technological advancements, particularly by the revolution in the information technology.

During the past decade and a half, there has been unprecedented increase in global wealth and trade, but the benefits have gone mostly to the developed countries internationally and to the richer segments of society in individual countries. Poverty has remained at high levels and disparity has been accentuating both among and within nations.

The MDGs are to be pursued within the framework of free markets and globalization, which has been emphasized in the interpretation of MDG 8 (building partnership for development). While the free market favours those who have control over/access to financial resources, technologies, and decision-making processes, the MDGs to be meaningfully pursued would require that the poor are empowered and facilitated to undertake economic and social activities which would ensure alleviation of their poverty and continued improvement in their living conditions. People's empowerment is not incorporated as a requirement in the way the MDGs have been formulated, but without this happening there will be little chance of an inclusive social process, that can ensure effective participation of and equitable benefit to the downtrodden, making much headway (Ahmad 2005). Clearly, there are contradictions between the dynamics of the two paradigms. At the same time, as mentioned earlier, the tenets of sustainable development are important ingredients of the process if the MDGs are to be achieved on a sustainable basis. That requires the introduction of such key elements as disparity reduction and environmental protection and enhancement in the process of generating the necessary policy and programme packages and adequate mobilization and proper allocation of financial resources to achieving the MDGs on a sustainable basis.

IV. The Emerging Issues

The key issues which the CMCs must address in pursuing sustainable rural development and poverty alleviation would include issues in economic, social, environmental, and political processes of social transformation. Let us identify and elaborate a number of key issues under different processes.

IV.1 The Economic Process

Here the major elements would include production, employment, infrastructure, and food security.

Production in both agricultural (crop, fishery, livestock, forestry) and non-agricultural sectors are of crucial importance. In agriculture, there may be problems involving large numbers of farmers relating to access to adequate and secure land and water bodies as well as to financial resources for acquiring irrigation waters, fertilizers, quality seeds, and other inputs. At the same time, the technical know-how of the farmers, particularly of the small and marginal ones, as well as their access to technologies are important aspects. In many countries, shortages of irrigation waters and unbalanced use of fertilizers lead to degradation of land. Water pollution and contamination (due to arsenic and/or residues of chemical pesticides/ herbicides/fertilizers used in agriculture) are often major problems, adversely affecting drinking water sources and fisheries. Another aspect is cost of production arising from high costs of inputs and low levels of productivity.

Often the poorer segments of the rural population would suffer from lack of access or inadequate access, as the case may be, to land and other inputs of agricultural production. The responses may be agrarian reforms including land reform, wherever applicable; provision of credit facilities, facilitation of access to technologies, and transfer of know-how in relation to good agricultural practices and proper use of fertilizers and other inputs.

Non-agricultural enterprises, including agro-support and agro-processing, are important sources of income in the rural areas. In this case, the problems relate to both supply and demand sides. Entrepreneurship training and access to credit and technologies, and market information relating to both the inputs and the products are important areas to be addressed. In the free market dispensation, there is also the issue of intense competition of domestically produced products with imports within the country. The export market is keenly competitive and needs to be explored on product by product basis for facilities to be created and assistance to be provided to selected potential products to succeed in the international markets.

Obviously, both production and distribution activities generate employment and income. The question is: to what extent? Productivity is a key element in relation to both the enhancement of income and the generation of savings and further investment, and, hence, further employment. In addition to technologies, skills of managers and workers are important determinants of productivity. Hence, it is essential to arrange education and training, as appropriate. At the same time, the issue of healthcare has to be addressed so that people are able to put in necessary efforts. Both males and females should be given due emphasis in education, training, and health provisions.

Food security is an important issue in poverty alleviation, which can be ensured, at the household level, through own production or purchases from the market. In the first case access to land and other inputs and necessary facilities would be necessary, while in the second case access to employment and, hence, purchasing power would be needed. From

this point of view also both agricultural and non-agricultural production and trading in the rural areas need to be given appropriate emphasis.

One of the key components of rural development is the infrastructural facilities, which would include roads, bridges, and other transport facilities; rural electrification; access to water; and appropriate marketing facilities. These constitute another area to focus on in promoting rural development not only from economic point of view through expansion of economic activities and augmentation of employment opportunities; but also from social and human capability development perspective, as good infrastructural facilities can facilitate education, health services, and socio-cultural activities.

IV.2 The Social Process

As already mentioned, education, training, and health are major elements of human capability development. As noted earlier, there is a lot to be desired in most of the CMCs in these regards. Outcomes achieved are often low and allocation of resources very inadequate. In education, some of the CMCs have done well; but others, particularly those in South Asia, still have a long way to go before they can raise the coverage and quality of primary and secondary education sufficiently. In order to support necessary research and development, many CMCs need to increase the proportion of tertiary enrollment going into science and technology. This is an issue of allocation and utilization of the available resources within the framework of an appropriate education and training policy. Quality primary education is the foundation on which the higher levels of education can be received properly by the students. It is, therefore, essential that quality of education at the primary level is first ensured. This requires that teachers have to be properly trained, schools properly equipped, and teaching effectively monitored.

A major social problem arises from the glaring and accentuating social disparity, which is true in all the CMCs, but more so in the relatively advanced ones (Table 2). This is not conducive to progress towards sustainable development. Hence, ways have to be found to promote patterns of production and employment, in which the poorer segments of society get priorities. Obviously, agriculture is one area, but promotion of small and medium enterprises throughout the country is another highly potential area for the poorer segments of society to be engaged. Urban informal sectors can also be facilitated for improved performance to help the poor people involved in these activities improve their income and living conditions. Once again, however, it is important to recognize that due to the free market regime, many products produced by these activities in different CMCs can face steep competition from imports. This is a tricky area, given that all the CMCs are now pursuing the paradigm of free market and globalization, which prescribes no government interventions in the markets. However, the government cannot abdicate the responsibility of undertaking policies and programmes to alleviate poverty and reduce disparity. It is important, therefore, to find balanced roles of the state and the market in addressing all the relevant issues towards achieving the goals of rural development and poverty reduction.

IV.3 Environmental Protection

A key element of sustainable development is the environmental protection and enhancement. A degraded environment causing imbalance in the ecosystem is not only ruinous in relation to productive activities but is also a health hazard for humans and animals and destructive of other life forms. The environmental degradation is caused by deforestation, salinization of water, pollution of air and water, and encroachment upon wetlands. In order for economic and social progress to be sustained, environmental degradation has to be arrested and a rejuvenation process initiated and carried forward. The environmental hazards such as floods, cyclones, tornadoes, droughts, and tsunami cause damages to and losses of property including crops, assets, and infrastructure. They devastate and cause deaths of humans and livestock. These natural hazards cause non-poor people to become suddenly poor and reduce the already poor to destitution. For rural development to be sustained, the issue of adaptation to the consequences of these natural hazards must be addressed through national policies and enhancement of community capabilities to minimize the consequences and rehabilitate the affected people as quickly as possible.

A major environmental problem is climate change caused by global warming, which will accentuate the various natural hazards. For example, floods may be more frequent and of longer duration as a result of increased precipitation and can, therefore, be very devastating. Indeed, the process of climate change is already upon us, manifested through increased and more devastating natural hazards in many parts of the world. There have been major floods in many countries in different parts of the world in recent years. In Bangladesh, major floods are now occurring more frequently (having occurred in 1973, 1988, 1998, and 2004). The most recent example is the hurricane Katrina in the USA. In the areas which are natural hazard-prone, it is important that the coping mechanisms undertaken by the local communities are properly evaluated and measures taken to improve their capacity for doing better what they already do and, also, take other necessary steps which they usually don't. It is important that benchmarks are established so that the outcomes of the adopted adaptation strategies can be measured in future.

IV.4 The Political Process

As indicated earlier, poverty and disparity have been persisting at high levels in most of the CMCs. Disparity has, in fact, been accentuating in the wake of market reforms and globalization, because this process excludes the socio-economically weaker segments and favours the stronger segments of society. In order for sustainable rural development and poverty reduction to be purposefully pursued, an inclusive society needs to be established, which can ensure that all segments of society have equitable access to opportunities, resources, facilities, and institutions for improving their living conditions. In this context, local governments at various levels, with politically devolved appropriate authority, can provide a basic framework for the people to be mobilized and facilitated to participate in various processes of social transformation. In some CMCs, there are quite effective local governments, while in others there are not. It is, therefore, necessary to ascertain what works best and what does not in particular situations facing different countries and then

provide intellectual inputs into the process of the development of appropriate local government institutions in various CMCs. It is possible, in this context, to learn from each other's experiences. Obviously, local governments alone cannot be sufficient. Other conditions such as improved education, training, and health as well as a political commitment towards generating an inclusive society need to be fulfilled.

In concluding this section, it may be emphasized that the above issues have been highlighted as being the key elements to be addressed properly in promoting sustainable rural development. It is recognized that all the CMCs have been pursuing rural development in the past using different approaches, often fragmented. A holistic approach is needed to find a comprehensive way forward (Ahmed 2005). A country can profitably build on the experiences, both successes and failures, it has gathered and the policies and institutions it has in place, abandoning those that don't work and strengthening those that do work. But, it is important that it takes those and the emerging issues in its stride within the framework of a holistic approach to rural development. Indeed, the people must be the focus and, hence, it is essential that the dynamics of the market and globalization paradigm are moderated by the dynamics of establishing an inclusive society in which equity can be promoted, poverty reduced, and sustainable development pathways constructed and traversed purposefully.

V. CIRDPAP's Role

As an intergovernmental institution, mandated to assist the member countries to promote rural development, CIRDPAP may position itself to promote a holistic and comprehensive rural development approach, taking into account the major global processes at work and the various processes of national social transformation outlined above. Within such a framework, it can focus on the key aspects in various processes with a view to generating lessons from past experiences of its member countries and formulating appropriate approaches that the member countries may undertake.

Poverty alleviation is the principal focus of the MDGs, which is crucially relevant for each of the CMCs in the context of their rural development, indeed national development. It is essential that assessments are made in each CMC to ascertain the impediments to participation and empowerment of the downtrodden and determine how best their situation can be improved, ensuring that the available resources are best developed and utilized. The following may be specified as emerging issues, arising from the analysis given above, to be addressed.

- Education, training, and health are key areas, which must be properly addressed with a view to improving human capability, as appropriate, so that people can contribute effectively to their own benefit and national development.
- A focus on the poor segments of society and, also, women in relation to both human capability development and access to resources will certainly help reduce socio-economic and gender disparity and promote social inclusiveness. This process can be facilitated by effective local government at various levels with appropriate devolved authority.

- In so far as production is concerned, the key areas to focus on may include access to land and various agricultural inputs, other assets, and facilities for the development of non-agricultural rural and informal urban activities.
- To facilitate rural development activities infrastructural facilities including transportation, water, electricity, and communication need to be properly improved/developed.
- Facilities are needed to be created/strengthened for necessary market information to be provided to entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs.
- The issues of appropriate technology and access to credit need to be investigated with a view to ascertaining the status and finding ways of ensuring the availability of both at affordable costs to all concerned.
- There can be a contradiction between the objectives of technological advancement and promotion of employment (CSCD 1989). This is a tricky issue, which needs to be addressed to ascertain how best both the objectives can be promoted to ensure productivity improvement on the one hand and purchasing power in the hands of the people for food security and improved living conditions on the other.
- Given that the environment is the basis of economic growth and that a healthy environment is critical for healthy human life and survival of other life forms, the issue of environmental protection and enhancement must be given due emphasis. The ongoing degradation of the environment is a serious problem, which is being compounded by climate change. Hence, the issue of adaptation to the consequences of major natural hazards must be addressed in the context of sustainable rural development. Here, the roles of both the government and the rural communities are important. While there should be appropriate national policies, the capabilities of the rural communities to manage the consequences of natural hazards better need to be developed. These issues need to be investigated and what can be done to overcome the problems identified.
- In promoting sustainable rural development, the existing and emerging issues in relation to the ongoing paradigm of market and globalization viz-a-viz the promotion of production patterns suited to the realities prevailing in each particular country will need to be addressed.

It is not possible, however, for CIRDAP to address all the issues mentioned above. A prioritizing is, therefore, necessary, given the resources it can muster and expertise it can mobilize. Also, it needs to forge cooperation with other agencies—national, regional and international—which have the expertise and resources in relation to different aspects so that it can make a meaningful contribution without committing duplication. But, CIRDAP has to go through a serious process of reviews, dialogues, and reflections to identify a niche for itself. In this context, CIRDAP may constitute a 'group of eminent persons', drawn from the Asia Pacific region, conversant with the dynamics of and emerging issues in development,

particularly rural development, to advice and assist it in designing and implementing its mandated tasks.

It should be mentioned, however, that CIRDAP, or a similar technical agency, can help identify the options and formulate the strategies. It is up to the national governments to take the decisions and act. It is, therefore, essential that there is a political will in each country in favour of rural development within a holistic framework, duly taking the emerging national and international dynamics on board.

Statistical Tables

Table 1: Selected Basic Statistics: CIRDAP Member Countries (CMCs), 2003

Country	HDI rank	Total population (million)	Rural population		GDP	
			%	million	Total billion US\$	Per capita US\$
Malaysia	61	24.4	36.2	8.8	103.7	4250
Thailand	73	63.1	68.0	42.9	143.0	2266
Philippines	84	80.2	39.0	31.3	80.6	1004
Sri Lanka	93	20.4	78.9	16.1	18.2	892
Iran	99	68.2	33.4	22.8	137.1	2010
Vietnam	108	82.0	74.2	60.8	39.2	478
Indonesia	110	217.4	54.5	118.5	208.3	958
India	127	1070.8	71.7	767.8	600.6	560
Myanmar	129	49.5	70.5	34.9	-	-
Lao PDR	133	5.7	79.3	4.5	2.1	368
Pakistan	135	151.8	65.9	100.0	82.3	542
Nepal	136	26.1	85.0	22.2	5.9	226
Bangladesh	139	136.6	75.7	103.5	51.9	380
Afghanistan	-	24.5	76.0	18.6	-	-
Total CMCs	-	2020.7	66.9	1352.7	1472.9	745
Total: World	-	6,313.8	51.3	3238.9	36058.3	5,801
Total: Developing countries	-	5,022.4	58.0	2913.0	6981.9	1,414
CMCs as % of World total	-	32.0	130.4	41.8	4.1	12.8
CMCs as % of Developing countries total	-	40.2	115.3	46.4	21.1	52.7

Source: UNDP2005, pp. 232-33 & 267-68.

Table 2: CMCs: Poverty, Nutrition, Mortality, and Disparity

Country	Population below income poverty line (%)		Nutrition					Share of income or consumption, 1997-2002		
	US\$ 1	National poverty line	Population under-nourished (% of total 2000/02)	Children underweight for age (% under age 5) 1995-2003	Infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births 2003)	Under-five mortality rate (per 1000 live births 2003)	Maternal mortality rate (per 1000 live births 2000)	Poorest 20%	Richest 20%	Gini
Malaysia	<2	15.5	2	15	7	7	41	4.4	54.3	0.492
Thailand	<2	13.1	20	19	23	26	44	6.1	50.0	0.432
Philippines	14.6	36.8	22	31	30	36	200	5.4	52.3	0.461
Sri Lanka	7.6	25.0	22	29	13	15	92	8.3	42.2	0.332
Iran	<2	-	11	11	33	39	76	5.1	49.9	0.430
Vietnam		50.9	19	33	19	23	130	7.5	45.4	0.370
Indonesia	7.5	27.1	6	26	31	41	230	8.4	43.3	0.343
India	34.7	28.6	21	47	63	87	540	8.9	43.3	0.325
Myanmar	-	-	6	35	76	107	360	-	-	-
Lao PDR	26.3	38.6	22	40	82	91	650	7.6	45.0	0.370
Pakistan	13.4	32.6	20	38	81	103	500	8.8	42.3	0.330
Nepal	37.7	42.0	17	48	61	82	740	7.6	44.8	0.367
Bangladesh	36.0	49.8	30	48	46	69	380	9.0	41.3	0.318
Afghanistan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: UNDP 2005, pp. 227-28, 241-42, 251-52 & 271-72.

Table 3: Literacy and Enrollment

Country	Adult literacy rate (% age15+), 2003	Youth literacy rate (% ages 15-24), 2003	Net primary enrollment ratio (%), 2002/03	Net secondary enrollment ratio (%), 2002/03	Children reaching grade 5 (% of grade students), 2001/02	Tertiary students in science and technology % of all tertiary students, 1998-2003
Malaysia	88.7	97.2	93	70	87	40
Thailand	92.6	98.0	85	..	94	..
Philippines	92.6	95.1	94	59	76	25
Sri Lanka	90.4	95.6	..	..	98	..
Iran	77.0	..	86	..	95	..
Vietnam	90.3	..	94	65	87	20
Indonesia	87.9	98.0	92	54	89	..
India	61.0	76.4	87	..	84	20
Myanmar	89.7	94.4	84	35	65	42
Lao PDR	68.7	78.5	85	35	64	8
Pakistan	48.7	64.5	59	..	..	..
Nepal	48.6	70.1	71	..	65	..
Bangladesh	41.1	49.7	84	45	54	13
Afghanistan	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: UNDP 2005, pp. 259-60.

Table 4: CMCs : Expenditure on Education and Health

Country	Public expenditure on education 2000-02		Proportion of public expenditure on education by level 2000-02		Expenditure on health (% of GDP) 2002	
	As % of GDP	As % of total govt. exp.	Pre-primary & primary	Secondary	Public	Private
Malaysia	8.1	20.3	32.0	33.5	2.0	1.8
Thailand	5.2	28.3	42.3	20.5	3.1	1.3
Philippines	3.1	17.8	57.6	22.2	1.1	1.8
Sri Lanka	8.1	..	..	..	1.8	1.9
Iran	4.9	17.7	25.1	36.0	2.9	3.1
Vietnam	3.1	18.6	23.0	48.0	1.5	3.7
Indonesia	1.2	9.0	37.1	39.3	1.2	2.0
India	4.1	12.7	38.4	40.1	1.3	4.8
Myanmar	..	..	..	..	0.4	1.8
Lao PDR	2.8	11.0	47.0	19.0	1.5	1.4
Pakistan	1.8	7.8			1.1	2.1
Nepal	3.4	14.9	61.5	22.1	1.4	3.8
Bangladesh	2.4	15.5	45.4	45.5	0.8	2.3
Afghanistan	..	..	..	..	..	..

Source: UNDP 2005, pp. 228-29 & Pp. 256-57.

Table 5: Access to Water and Sanitation

Country	Population with sustainable access to improved sanitation %, 2002	Population with sustainable access to an improved water source %, 2002
Malaysia	96	95
Thailand	99	85
Philippines	73	85
Sri Lanka	91	78
Iran	84	93
Vietnam	41	73
Indonesia	52	78
India	30	86
Myanmar	73	80
Lao PDR	24	43
Pakistan	54	90
Nepal	27	84
Bangladesh	48	75
Afghanistan		

Source: UNDP 2005, pp. 241-42.

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UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Targets

	The goals	Targets
1.	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day • Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
2.	Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
3.	Promote gender equality and empower woman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015
4.	Reduce child mortality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce by two-thirds the mortality rate among children under five
5.	Improve maternal health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce by three-quarters the maternal mortality ratio
6.	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS • Halt and begin to reverse the incident of malaria and other diseases
7.	Ensure environmental Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmers, reverse loss of environmental resources • Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water • Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020
8.	Develop a global partnership for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory, includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction—nationally and internationally • Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction • Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing states • Deal comprehensively with developing countries debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term • In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth • In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries • In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies—especially information and communications technologies

Source: UN Millennium Development Goals—<<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>>

III. Development of Comprehensive Knowledge Generation and Review Mechanism of Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Processes in the CIRDAP Member Countries

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I. Introduction*

Integrated Rural Development (IRD) emerged as a dominant and popular concept of rural development in Bangladesh and other developing countries of the Asia-Pacific region during 1970s. Thereafter, due to paradigm shifts occurring in the overall national development strategies, i.e. from state regulation to market liberalization and privatization, participation and empowerment and globalization and achievement of MDGs, the whole concept of rural development came under serious scrutiny as a development strategy. Not only that IRD lost its preeminence as policy tool since 1980s and onward because of intensification of the thrust on poverty reduction especially through adoption of various participatory approaches, a new rethinking on rural development strategies is currently under way to meet the challenges arising from changes in the dynamics of the rural economy and society and the changes in donor perception and preferences dictated by the need to deal with the implications for globalization and achievement of the MDGs³.

The new narratives on rural development outline a set of five principles as the important determinants of a successful RD strategy which include: (i) diversity of rural situations, (ii) past and future changes in the rural areas (iii) synergizing with the poverty reduction policies, (iv) democratic decentralization and (v) increase of productivity of all rural sectors to maximize growth and reduce poverty. Effective implementation of these principles aimed at achieving sustainable rural economic growth will require design and implementation of a comprehensive and innovative rural development strategy through a multi-pronged but well coordinated approach made by different rural development actors including the government agencies, NGOs, private sector actors and the donors. Unfortunately, the ground reality is much different than desired as it has emerged from our study of the institutional framework currently in place for implementation of rural development and poverty alleviation policies and programmes in Bangladesh⁴.

As is well-known, experimentation with alternative models (approaches) of RD and PA in Bangladesh has been distinctive for its variety and popularity. Almost a bewildering variety of mostly donor funded interventions, based on "projectised approaches" have been conceived, developed and tested with varying degrees of success by a multiplicity of institutional actors in Bangladesh overtime. But, despite being a priority agenda in the successive governments' national development strategies as well as the major destination of support by the international donor agencies over the past decades, RD and PA are yet to make significant headway in Bangladesh and in many other developing countries. Of the various constraints facing efficient implementation of the RD and PA policies, the problems of proper

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³ Some of the seminal works exposing the nature of contemporary debates on the new thinking on effective RD strategies include, Caroline, A and Simon, M (2001), Frank, E. and Stephen, B. (2001), Delius, P. et.al. (2001) and World Bank (1998).

⁴ Ahmed, M.U. (2005).

coordination, sequencing and synchronization of the programmes and activities conducted by various actors have remained unaddressed⁵. In many countries this has led to serious duplication of efforts, lack of harmonization of functions and activities and worst of all unhealthy competition among the stakeholders as opposed to collaboration and cooperation leading to strategic partnership and rapport building.

The need for designing and implementing a concerted and coherent institutional mechanism for RD is reinforced by the impending challenges of globalization and achievement of the MDGs within the framework of a market economy system. However, as the targets of MDGs are time-bound and disaggregated and need to be implemented by different line ministries and their affiliated agencies and departments, NGOs, and other private sectors stakeholders, this will involve rigorous monitoring and evaluation through collection, collation and analysis of data for tracking progress at both individual country and regional levels. It is in this context that to-day's regional dialogue on RD has been arranged to discuss as to how best CIRDAAP can assist the CMCs in developing and institutionalizing a comprehensive mechanism for knowledge generation, creation of a data base, information dissemination and evaluation of the RD and PA processes to achieve sustained development of the rural economy for poverty alleviation and achievement of the MDGs. It is important to remind the reader at this point that though we have used a different title of the paper for expediency, the theme of the paper is to analyse the process of development of a monitoring and evaluation (M & E) mechanism. Thus the terms CKGRM and M & E are used interchangeably.

II. The Role of CIRDAAP in the Changed Context

When IRD was being implemented by the countries of the Asia-Pacific region during 1970s, the need for establishment of national IRD institutions and creation of an inter-governmental organization was felt to facilitate regional cooperation among the countries relating to IRD planning, policy making and programmes and activities through the promotion of regional networking among the countries of the region. In response to these felt needs, CIRDAAP came into being in 1979 at the initiative of the FAO and other UN Agencies and donor organizations. CIRDAAP's mandate was then to work as a regional forum, a clearing house and a data bank and an inter-governmental think tank for policy advocacy and an autonomous service delivery institution for policy dialogue to facilitate effective planning and implementation of the RD and PA processes in the CIRDAAP member countries (CMCs). CIRDAAP tries to realize its mandated responsibilities of assisting national action and promoting regional cooperation and networking relating to IRD and PA by performing a wide range of activities. It undertakes research and action research/pilot projects, organizes training, workshops, seminars and consultative conferences, provides technical support to the national IRD centres and international organizations and serves as a knowledge base and data bank for the RD and PA activities by disseminating such knowledge and information to the contact ministries and link institutions (LIs) of the Asia Pacific region.

⁵ Referring to the RD implementation difficulties, Farrington et.al (2001) reminds us that prioritization of RD policies according to their expected benefits may turn out to be sub-optimal because of their susceptibility to various implementation constraints.

While CIRDAP's mission and vision and its institutional structure perceived and developed by its pioneers still hold good broadly, they require contextualization with the contemporary realities, especially changes and evolutions in the IRD concept and paradigm shifts in the national development strategies. Thus, in view of the current trends and emerging changes noted in this paper and elaborated in Dr. Q.K's presentation, the role of CIRDAP in both national and regional perspectives needs critical reorientation both conceptually and structurally so that it may be repositioned as an effective regional forum for policy coordination and promotion of regional cooperation in the areas of RD and PA in the Asia-Pacific region⁶.

It is against this background that CIRDAP developed a strategic framework document (termed CFSD in this paper), based on a careful review of its past endeavours, experiences and achievements, and future challenges in order to be able to make meaningful contributions to CMCs in achieving their goals relating to RD and PA and through these the broad national development objectives of faster, equitable and sustained economic growth and social development⁷.

A strategic issue proposed in the CFSD is to develop and institutionalize a comprehensive knowledge generation and review mechanism (termed hereafter as CKGRM) for collection, collation and dissemination of data and information from all concerned and develop a knowledge base on the progress of implementation of RD and PA policies and achievement of the MDGs. This is proposed to be done through utilizing and revitalizing the contact ministries and the LIs in the CMCs which are mandated and equipped for carrying out RD research and training and generating knowledge and documentation of information. We now turn to conceptualize and present a framework of the proposed CKGRM for discussion and approval of the distinguished delegates and participants.

III. CGKRM: A Proposed Framework

After having established the case for developing and institutionalizing an effective CGKRM for synergizing and coordinating the RD and PA processes in the CMCs for better results, we propose a conceptual and institutional framework in this section of the paper for consideration and deliberation by the delegates and the distinguished participants.

3.1 The Concept of CGKRM

⁶ One strand of opinion is that while it is important for CIRDAP to build a future vision and formulate an action plan by taking into account the changed contexts of IRD as a policy tool, it may be wise to stay tuned to its own line of expertise and excellence and leave the untrodden paths to be covered by other institutional actors already working in those areas.

⁷ A short summary of the major policy issues proposed in the CFSD is available in Ahmed M.U. (2005).

Conceptually speaking, M & E mechanisms are critical tools for tracking progress of implementation and measuring the outcomes and impacts of the programmes and projects. The direction and soundness of national RD and PA policies are critically dependent upon the accuracy of M & E results. Unfortunately, obtaining adequate and accurate data and information on the status of implementation of projects, though important for development of an efficient management information system, such data is hard to come by. Indeed, the need for instituting a regular M & E system to track the progress of development efforts in relation to the national development objectives, goals and targets has been emphatically noted since mid 1970s, but no systematic mechanism seems to have been set up in the countries of the Asia-Pacific region⁸.

In view of the past neglect, monitoring and evaluation systems are now a built-in component of the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) of these countries as these are expected to provide guides for action and the basis for necessary redirection in the national development policies and programmes. To provide a concrete example, the chapter (VIII) on Monitoring and Evaluation of the Bangladesh PRSP document starts with the statement that successful implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) and achievements of the goals of poverty reduction require a well-designed monitoring and evaluation system (GOB, 2004).

While monitoring is generally concerned with an assessment of inputs in relation to outputs of the projects, evaluation is more broad in scope than monitoring as it involves an assessment not only of inputs and outputs but also of the impacts on the targeted beneficiaries in the immediate and long-term periods which provide valuable information and guides for overall impact assessment. Though M & E functions are interrelated, there are important differences in their application to management of development programmes. While monitoring is an internal project activity relating to physical and financial progress and in the delivery of expected inputs to the recipients, evaluation assesses the overall project impacts and can be done in phases. The evaluation process identifies broader policy issues and lessons for future and helps governments and donor agencies to learn from the lessons of experience and change their focus and initiatives in matters of choice and selection of projects.

As noted before, the most important objective of CIRDAP in emphasizing the urgency of building an effective M & E mechanisms in the CMCs is to coordinate and monitor the RD efforts (encompassing planning, policy making, strategy formulation and choosing and selecting RD programmes and projects etc.) carried in these countries to ensure sustainability of the rural development process and intensification of the poverty alleviation efforts for achievement of the MDGs in the years to come. Indeed, the establishment of an integrated M & E mechanism at the national levels in the CMcs under CIRDAP initiatives will also dispense the need for putting in place a regional forum for meaningful exchange of

⁸ There has been a spurt of research activities since mid 1970s in the developing countries of Asia and the Pacific region to upgrade and improve their project formulation and implementation capacities through establishing detailed M & E mechanism. A survey of the relevant literature is available in Aslam, M. (2004).

knowledge, information and experiences and contribute towards improvement of planning and implementation systems of the RD and PA process in these countries.

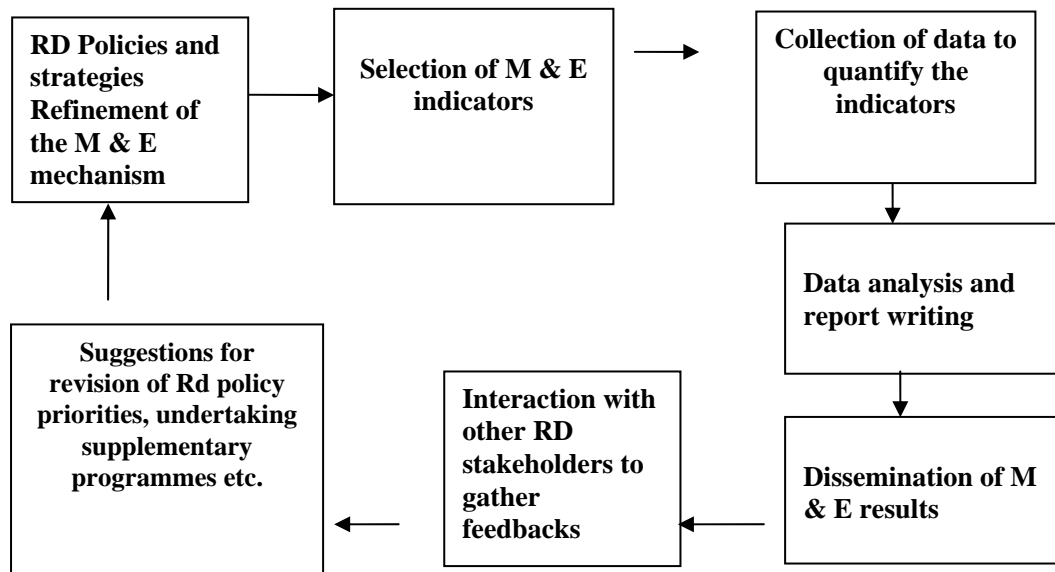
3.2 The Steps Involved in the Process

The important methodological steps involved in building an effective CGKRM mechanism may include the following:

- i) Identification of a uniform set of indicators for monitoring to be used in all CMCs;
- ii) Delineation of information requirements, collection of data through periodic surveys, studies and participatory appraisal processes etc.;
- iii) Development of appropriate indicators and methodologies for understanding interrelationships between MDGs and RD process;
- iv) Development of guidelines and checklists for continuous monitoring and evaluation of RD projects and activities;
- v) Provision of technical training and other logistic support to the CIRDAPI LIs (and other RD institutions) to enhance their in-house capacity to conduct surveys, collect, collate and process data and prepare reports pertaining to the M & E system;
- vi) Designation of a national focal point in each CMC which would be responsible for collection, storage, retrieval and analysis of the information gathered;
- vii) Dissemination of results and interaction with other RD stakeholders, civil society groups and activists to share ideas and receive feedbacks;
- viii) Development of regional mechanism for policy review, coordination and networking.

The steps involved in developing the monitoring and evaluation mechanism in the CMCs suggested above can be illustrated through using the flowchart provided below:

Flowchart of the System



3.3 Institutional Framework of the Mechanism

The M & E mechanism is designed to establish and institutionalize a regular and effective monitoring system at the national level in the individual CMCs and use it by CIRDAP to coordinate the RD related activities at the regional level for RD policy review and analysis and enabling the RD planers and policy makers in the CMCs to formulate and implement sustainable RD policies and programmes. The institutionalization of the M & E system is proposed to be as follows:

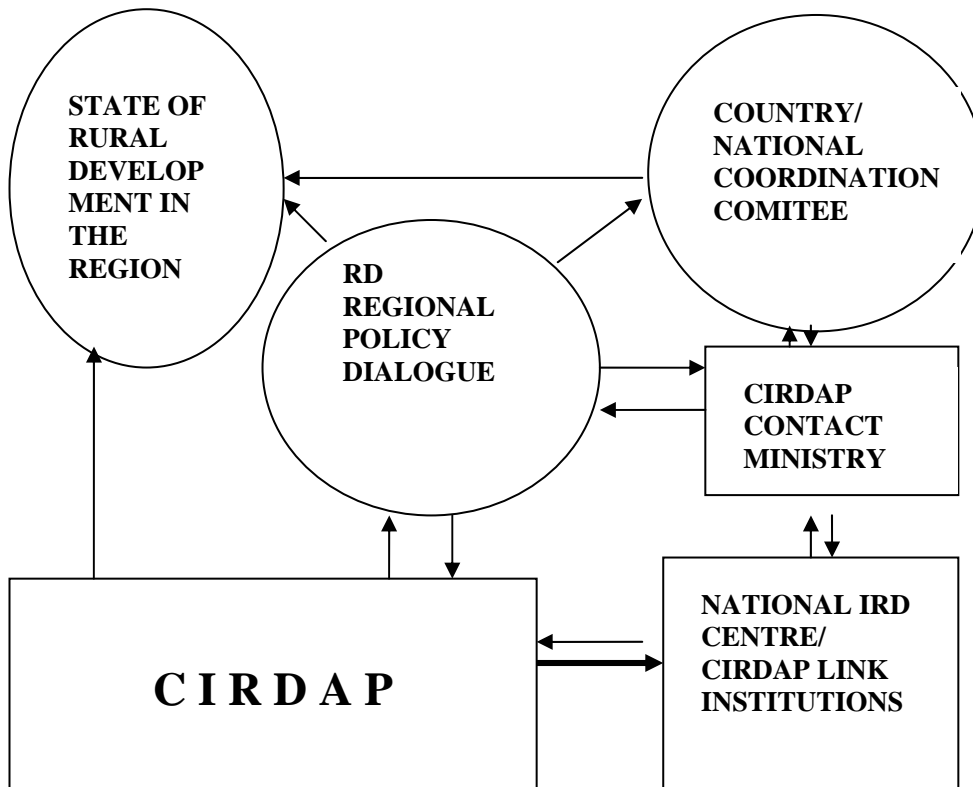
Institutions Responsible for Functional Coordination of the M & E System

Functions	Responsible Agency/Organization
Review of progress of RD policy implementation	National Coordination Committee headed by the Secretary of the Contact Ministry of CIRDAP, formulating and implementing national RD polices
Preparation of the Annual Review Document on RD policy implementation	CIRDAP Link Institution (i.e. BARD in Bangladesh) in the CMCs as designated by the contact ministry
Preparation of Biennial Synthesis Report on RD based on the Annual Reports prepared by the LIs	CIRDAP headquarters
Evaluation of the Biennial Report for policy coordination at the regional level	Holding Regional Policy Dialogue, based on the RDR during EC-GC meetings arranged by CIRDAP once in every two years

IV. Suggested Institutional Structure

The proposed institutional structure suggested to coordinate the M & E functions at both national and regional levels can be illustrated through the following structural framework.

FIG 1: STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK FOR FUNCTIONAL COORDINATION OF CGKRM SYSTEM IN CIRDAP MEMBER COUNTRIES



4.1. Data Availability for the System

The whole idea behind building a M & E mechanism is to put in place a continuous review process of the RD and PA policies, programmes and activities so that the policy priorities can be redirected, programmes and projects re-fixed and redesigned and the impacts evaluated. An important prerequisite for successful operation of the M & E mechanism is to collect adequate and accurate data and quantitative as well as qualitative information. In each CMC, there exists national data generating public sector institutions (i.e. BBS in Bangladesh) which may be used to perform this function. However, other sources including NGOs, different private sector agencies and research organizations may also be used for generating the required data base. As the lack of availability of timely and reliable data is a perennial problem in most developing countries, measures need to be taken by the Government to streamline the data collection process and the mechanism involved.

More importantly, relevant data on the inputs, expenditure, outputs and impacts must also flow from the relevant ministries through their affiliated agencies involved in the RD activities to the national focal point (NFP) designated by CIRDAP in each CMC.

4.2. Suggested Indicators

The data gathering efforts is closely interlinked with clear identification of an appropriate set of indicators reflecting the status of the RD efforts and impacts. This is the most important task involved in the development of an effective CKGRM or M & E system and as such threadbare analysis and discussions are needed. The tentative list of indicators suggested for monitoring RD process in the CMCs is listed below. This list remains to be revised and refined as the actual process of monitoring progresses⁹. This will involve undertaking serious research studies, analysis and discourses. Following the PRSP (GOB, 2004) methodology, three types of indicators, i.e. inputs, output and impacts are listed below in the matrix¹⁰.

Matrix of Indicators of M & E for Rural Development

Expenditure and Inputs	Intermediate Indicators	Outputs/Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure on Rural Development • Expenditure on Agricultural Development by sub-sectors • Disbursement of agricultural credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of agricultural GDP by sub-sectors • Growth of agricultural output by sub-sectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per capita food consumption • Consumption of vegetables and fruits • Wage rates in agriculture and rural industries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure for input support to agriculture • Expenditure on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of new agricultural crops • Degree of availability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity of crops Growth of cereals, Employment in agriculture

⁹ It may be relevant to add here in this connection that CIRDAP conducted several studies before related to development of monitoring and evaluation indicators for tracking progress of RD processes in its member countries. While finalizing the selection of indicators for the present study the monitoring indicators developed earlier will be used selectively.

¹⁰ This section has drawn heavily from the relevant section of the Draft PRSP document with necessary modifications for our purpose.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> agricultural research Expenditure on Agricultural Extension services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> of inputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Export of fruits and vegetables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure on input support to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> livestock and poultry fisheries Expenditure on other support (i.e. credit) to development of rural ministries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth of production by sub-sectors Growth of exports Growth of rural industrial enterprises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth of the non-farm sector as a whole Linkages with agriculture Employment generation in the rural industries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure on rural roads, culverts and bridges Expenditure on rural electricity supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kilometers of rural roads by category No. of electricity – consumers in the rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural urban retail prices of essential commodities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure on development of Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of primary and secondary schools Rate of drop-outs No. of students graduated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross primary enrollment Gross secondary enrollment % of passing student at secondary level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure on health and family planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilization of family planning devices % of population covered by ESP % of births attended by trained personnel (doctors, nurses, TBI) (rural/urban) % of children covered by each type of immunization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infant mortality rates Child (under 5) mortality rates Life expectancy at birth Per cent of population using sanitary and semi-sanitary latrines
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure on housing and sanitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of additional low- cost housing No. of installations for tube-well water purification No. of hygienic latrines installed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of homeless with housing facility Percent of households owning houses % of population with access to safe water and sanitation Number of persons with access to arsenic-free water in arsenic contaminated areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditure on safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of benefi- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food security of the poorest,

<p>nets and disaster management</p>	<p>aries by program, such as VGD, VGF, FFW, FFE/CFE, FSS, TR, GD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of beneficiaries covered by food-assisted programmes in 'poor areas' (identified through poverty mapping) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal food insecurity of the poor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure on local government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources in the hands of local Govt. • Whether timely LG elections held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of involvement of LG institutions in RD activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure on improvement of environment • Expenditure on mitigation of harmful effects of environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes undertaken to preserve poors' right on CPR • Progress in formulating rural energy strategy • Area under new forestry • Measures for bio-diversity • Waste management coverage • Safe water supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of poor and non-poor with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to safe water • access to CPR (av.cons.) • Per cent of poor and non-poor with awareness about sust. env. • Extent of bio-diversity • Per cent area with forestry • Percentage of population with access to Sanitation facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure on micro-credit and other credit for the poor through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCBs • PKSf • PDBF • Large NGOs • Other government Programmes • Expenditure on micro-credit and other credit for the poor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of borrowers and size of credit • Sectoral allocation of micro-credit • Repayment rates, lending costs • Rate of interest (range, frequency distr.) • Employment generation • Employment generation (by sector/sub-sector, male/ female, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment generation and income impact • Graduation rates • Rate of return to credit • Rate of return to labour • New employment days • Difference in household income between MC recipient and other poor • Productivity of labour in these employment • Unemployment/ underemployment rate in the

	rural/urban)	relevant area
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4.3 Institutional Capacity Building

In each CMC, the proposed national steering committee (NSC) may consist of the representatives from all line ministries involved in the RD implementation process including those from the NGOs, civil society, academia and research organizations and other private sector stakeholders. This will be the apex body for monitoring and overall assessment of the progress and impacts of the RD efforts. Needless to emphasize, the NSC will also address the policy-related and strategic issues arising out of the M & E functions performed by national RD focal point and will be responsible for resetting RD priorities and redesigning RD programmes and projects if so required in the light of the results obtained. The formation of NCC will indirectly assure political support and commitment of the government towards RD and PA processes.

The national RD focal point (NFP) or the LIs in each CMC will develop and function as the effective M & E unit with guidance and assistance from the CIRDAP contact ministries or the “lead ministry” for rural development in each country. It is thus obvious that the LIs will closely cooperate with the national RD organizations and agencies (i.e. like BRDB in Bangladesh), establish close linkages with other line ministries and interact with all relevant stakeholders involved in promoting rural development. The NFP will undertake regular consultations with the national think tanks on RD and PA processes through holding seminars and discussing the Annual Monitoring Report prepared for CIRDAP.

A crucially important and relevant issue in the entire M & E mechanism development process is that adequate support measures have to be adopted by the respective CMC governments, perhaps in collaboration with the prospective donors to assist capacity building of the NFPs and strengthen the RD and PA implementation bodies working under different line ministries and playing important role in fostering rural development.

As far as CIRDAP is concerned, it will collect the Annual Monitoring Report prepared by the NFPs and prepare the consolidated RDR for the Asia-Pacific region. The synthesis report will be presented for discussion in the regional dialogue planned to be held between the EC & GC meetings once in every two year in one of the CMCs. The outcomes of deliberations on the RDR will enable CIRDAP to facilitate exchange of ideas and experiences in rural development and stimulate new thinking and approaches to the most urgent problems of rural poverty alleviation in the Asia-Pacific region. Further such a process will provide opportunity for discussing success stories about RD processes at the regional levels and pave the way for replicating them in the CMCs. This will also enable CIRDAP to effectively provide technical services to the CMCs to strengthen the LIs and various other agencies working under their RD ministries, pursue holistic approach and coordinated efforts towards attaining sustainable rural development, faster rate of equitable growth, and alleviation of endemic poverty.

V. Summing UP

This paper has discussed three issues. It emphasized the need for rethinking on the concept of rural development in the light of paradigm shifts in the national development strategies. In view of the changes in the current thinking on rural development narratives, restructuring and reorientation of CIRDP's mission and vision and the services provided by it as a regional forum to the member countries as proposed in the CFSD is highlighted next. It is in this context that CIRDP proposes to establish and institutionalize a comprehensive M & E mechanism to generate knowledge and information on rural development, disseminate them among the member countries and concerned national and international agencies and thereby facilitate speedy and effective exchange of ideas and experiences regarding RD and PA processes at the regional level for achieving sustained rural development and poverty alleviation.

After providing the background and rationale, a tentative framework for the M & E mechanism has been proposed for deliberations by the honourable EC & GC members and delegates and the distinguished participants. It must be reiterated that once it is agreed to set up the proposed M & E mechanism extensive research and consultations will be needed to give it a concrete shape to monitor the RD process through a system of close coordination and networking. As a natural corollary to the process a regional dialogue on rural development policies, strategies and progress and impacts as the present one organized by CIRDP will be a continuous process in the days ahead.

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V. Report of the Regional Policy Dialogue on Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation

01 October 2005, CIRDAP HQs, Dhaka, Bangladesh

I. Introduction

A Day-long Regional Policy Dialogue on Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation was held at CIRDAP Headquarters in Dhaka on October 1, 2005. The purpose of holding the Regional Policy Dialogue was to reposition rural development as a policy tool at the centre stage of the national development strategies, sharpen the focus on rural development and poverty alleviation and identify some of the critical institutional issues which in CIRDAP's view are standing on the way to sustainable development, economic growth and social progress of a nation through rural development and poverty alleviation processes in the CIRDAP Member Countries. Policy makers from 14 CIRDAP Member Countries (CMCs) took part in the Policy Dialogue.

High-level Delegation consisting of H.E.s the Ministers and Secretaries of line Ministries in the CMCs who came to attend the CIRDAP Policy Body Meetings (Executive Committee/Governing Council) in Dhaka, took part in the deliberations. Other Distinguished participants and guests included, among others, HE Ambassadors / High Commissioners or their representatives of the Diplomatic Missions in Dhaka, Dignitaries, Senior Government Officials, representatives of UN System Organizations – FAO/RAP and donor community, Specialized Agencies, International Organizations, Rural Development Experts from UK and Japan, GOs/NGOs/INGOs, academicians, researchers in policy-matters and specialists who were working as Think Tank members in various organizations and selected members of Civil Society participated in the Policy Dialogue. Mr. Progo Nurdjaman, Secretary General, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of the Republic of Indonesia and Chairperson of CIRDAP Governing Council (GC-14) Chaired the Dialogue. Introductory Remarks were made by Dr. Durga P. Paudyal, Director General, CIRDAP.

As part of the Programme, the Chairperson unveiled the Draft Rural Development Report 2005, prepared by CIRDAP for comments and feedback. Then, there were presentations of three papers and observations from the GC delegates and other distinguished participants.

In the Policy Dialogue, following papers were presented:

1. An Overview of the Draft Rural Development Report 2005 by Dr. B. Sudhakar Rao, Director Training, CIRDAP;
2. Emerging Issues Concerning Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation in the Asia-Pacific Region by Dr. Q.K. Ahmad, Chairman, Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP), Dhaka;
3. Development of a Comprehensive Knowledge Generation and Review Mechanism of Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Processes in the CIRDAP Member Countries: A Suggested Framework, by Dr. Momtaz Uddin Ahmed, Director, Research, CIRDAP.
4. HE the Ministers/Delegates of Governing Council from CIRDAP Member Countries (CMCs) also presented their observations.

The presentations were followed by the remarks made by the three Designated Discussants who were Dr. Q. Shahabuddin, Director General, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), Dhaka; Dr. R. Radhakrishna, Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, India; and Mr. Arun Kumar Saha from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) - Dhaka. The day-long Policy Dialogue was rolled on with open-house discussion by the participants and observers. The closing remarks were presented by the Director General, CIRDAP.

II. Observations of the Governing Council Delegates, discussants, and other participants:

Afghanistan delegate: Emphasized the need for comprehensive analysis of poverty in the region and attracted attention towards the problem of political instability which involves the need for budgetary provisions on military expenditures. It was suggested that such expenditures should be diverted to rural development so as to achieve economic growth in the region.

Indian delegate: Advised CIRDAP to work in the areas of core competence and the need for policy advocacy and suggestions based on CIRDAP's studies and evaluations [policy evaluations] to be adopted by CMCs. Also asked CIRDAP to concentrate on rural development, encourage small business among rural sectors especially the cooperatives. Likewise, the use of information technology in the rural areas has to be promoted to help them cope in the growing market system. The delegate from India pointed out the role of "middleman" in the entire market system, the importance of ensuring empowerment of the rural poor through education, outsourcing, and support for agriculture, farm and non-farm enterprises.

Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam delegates shared common views on the importance of empowering the rural poor. They also shared the different approaches in the country-level implementation of rural development programs: generating income and sustainable jobs; community empowerment and capacity building; integrated rural development planning and implementation of projects using participatory approach; self-help groups development; infrastructure development; training for job generation; promote M & E through village-level management and networking; and diversification of activities in rural areas.

Malaysian delegate: Shared Malaysia's successful achievements on infrastructure development, rural industries, nurturing excellent individuals, resilient societies and sustainable economy. The Malaysian delegate noted that it was through strong political will and support, full commitment for administrative capability, explicit policy statements and clear targets which made them successful in rural development. She also emphasized the need for specific plans for the rural areas to be incorporated in the national policy framework of development in which inclusive development and equitable distribution can be part of the overall plan.

Nepal delegate: Insurgency resulted in the proliferation of internal displacement of rural folks. As a result, there is need for a special program on how the farm workers could stay in the communities.

Pakistan delegate: Emphasized on integration of joining hands by complementing each other for every effort, opening doors for economic integration, getting benefit from the successful experiences of other nations and by renewing commitments to speed up rural development in the CMCs at national and regional levels.

Philippine delegate: The Philippines delegate expressed that CIRDP should find its niche, what it can do which others cannot. The ASEAN-link is a good idea including having access to Gulf/Middle East funds or Islamic Banks. He likewise mentioned that the Philippines is adopting the total approach to development by involving the different tiers in government and observing governance through involvement of various stakeholders in ensuring success and sustainability, specifically those programs that local governments need to sustain. The UN is making agrarian reform a part of the agenda in the forth-coming high-level meeting on agrarian and rural development as it recognized the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program as a successful state policy of development.

Sri Lanka delegate: Emphasized the importance of involving different players in rural development such as the NGOs, civil society and business sector. He mentioned the need for human resource development, technology, organization and other resources such as land and forest.

FAO: The invited observer thanked CIRDP for the opportunity of listening to the different delegates from CMCs and expressed enthusiasm for beginning fresh partnership with FAO. He reiterated the importance of improving communication among CMCs so as to know the real institutional needs that FAO could assist.

UK: Shared his views about governance and the need for studying and analysing anti-corruption mechanisms so as to attain the goals of rural development.

Observations of the Designated Discussants

The designated discussants acknowledged Dr. Q.K.'s excellent presentation on the emerging issues concerning rural development and poverty alleviation. The paper also highlighted the roles of CIRDP in regenerating the rural economy in the context of market liberalization and globalization.

Dr. Q. Shahabuddin commented that planning for development must not be overlooked so as to improve the living conditions of both the rural and urban poor. He also pointed out some contradictions between the dynamics of the two paradigms: economics [disparity reduction] and environment [protection and enhancement]. Dr. Shahabuddin made a few important suggestions for incorporation in the revised version of Dr. Q.K.'s paper. The need for diversification of the crop protection sector, development of social safety net measures

and improved governance were categorically emphasized as some of the major issues to be adequately emphasized.

Dr. Radhakrishna devoted more attention towards Dr. Rao's presentation. He emphasised the need for updating the information used in the RDR-2005. He also remarked that CIRDAP has to study the impact of macro-economic policies in the lives of the rural poor sectors. On the paper of Dr. Momtaz Uddin Ahmed, he emphasized the need for designing and implementing an M & E system that is supported by coherent institutional mechanisms for rural development. The usefulness of M & E is reinforced by the challenges of globalization and tracking of the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals, Dr. Radhakrishna noted.

Invited guest from Asian Development Bank shared views on their current involvement in funding development programs and projects in Bangladesh. He emphasized the need to know the priorities of CMCs and mentioned that unless budget is allocated, rural development and poverty alleviation will not be properly addressed.

Other participants commented that the regional policy dialogue is a potential way to deepen cooperation among the CMCs. The regional policy dialogue ended with word of thanks from the Director General of CIRDAP and the closing remarks by the Chairperson.

III. Major Recommendations Arising from the Deliberations

The delegates and the participants of the policy dialogue discussed the papers presented in the dialogue and recommended the following:

The dialogue noted that, within the core competence of CIRDAP and the need for policy advocacy at the country level, CIRDAP's studies and evaluation need to be harmonized in such a way that the CMCs be able to promote and replicate success-stories. The review of the issues raised in the dialogue pointed out a number of areas where appropriate actions might be taken to strengthen the relationship between CIRDAP and CMCs:

1. With the recognized ability and advantages of CIRDAP, emphasis should be given on rural development and avoid venturing into unknown territories. Concentration on promoting small business in the rural sectors through organizing cooperatives should be given special attention;
2. CIRDAP should emphasize on undertaking a comprehensive analysis of poverty in the region highlighting specific problems in the country/regional levels. Emphasis may also be put on the need for diverting the budgets on military expenditures towards rural development so as to achieve economic growth in the region.
3. Advocacy to promote the use of information technology in the rural areas to help the rural poor cope with the growing market access challenges and opportunities.

4. The dialogue duly recognized the importance of generating empowerment for rural poor through education, outsourcing, and support for agriculture, farm and non-farm enterprises and suggested for developing specific programmes for them;
5. Malaysia's successful achievements in infrastructure development, rural industries, nurturing excellent individuals, resilient societies and sustainable economy due to strong political will and support, strong commitment towards efficient administration and management, explicit policy statements and clear targets etc. which led to successful rural development were emphatically cited. It was emphasized that there should be specific plans for the rural areas to incorporate these issues in the national framework of development in the CMCs;
6. Targeted programmes should be developed for instable communities;
7. In order to achieve the rural development objectives at the regional level, the CMCs should cooperate with each other meaningfully through joining hands by complementing each other for every effort, opening doors for economic integration, getting benefit from the successful experiences of other nations and by renewing commitments ;
8. Specific criteria should be developed to distinguish one country from other and to identify the success models that could be replicated;
9. CIRDAP should find its niche, to identify what it can do which others cannot. New partners of development should be found;
10. Emphasized the importance of involving different players in rural development such as the NGOS, civil society and business sector;
11. CIRDAP should work closely with other development partners and should be able to provide fast hand information on the priority need of the CMCs;
12. Communication mechanisms among CMCs should be improved in order to know the real institutional needs;
13. In order to attain the rural development goals, the issue of governance and the need for anti-corruption mechanisms should be highlighted;
14. In order to improve the living conditions of both the rural and urban poor, the CMCs should give more emphasis on planning for development since there exists contradictions between the dynamics of the two paradigms: economics [disparity reduction] and environment [protection and enhancement];
15. CIRDAP should undertake more study on the impact of macro-economic policies on the lives of the rural poor sectors;
16. Emphasized the need for designing and implementing a knowledge development and Review Mechanism that is supported by coherent institutional mechanisms for rural development. The usefulness of the proposed mechanism is reinforced by the challenges of globalization and tracking of the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals.

17. CIRDAP should continue to prepare the RD report by using appropriate methodology to come up with a unified report on rural development out of the various activities, experiences, and update on new state policies from the different CMCs. The Rural Development Report could be patterned the way UNDP came up with the indicators, i.e., HDI, thus CIRDAP could come up with RDI;
18. The regional policy dialogue is a potential way to deepen cooperation among CMCs and CIRDAP and should continue in future.

**Regional Policy Dialogue on
Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation**

**01 October, 2005
CIRDAP HQs, Dhaka**

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**Regional Policy Dialogue on
Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation**

**01 October, 2005
CIRDAP HQs, Dhaka**

Programme

Plenary Session

***Chairperson:* Mr. Progo Nurdjaman, Secretary General, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of the Republic of Indonesia and Chairperson, CIRDAP Governing Council**

- 09:40: Arrival of the delegates/guests
- 09:45: Tea/Snacks
- 10:00: Introductory Remarks by Director General, CIRDAP
Dr. Durga P. Paudyal
- 10:10: Presentation of an Overview of the Rural Development Report 2005
Dr. B. Sudhakar Rao, Director, Training, CIRDAP
- 10:30: Emerging Issues concerning Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation in the Asia-Pacific Region
Dr. Q.K. Ahmad, Chairman, Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP)
- 10:50: Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Processes in the CIRDAP Member Countries: A Suggested Framework
Dr. Momtaz Uddin Ahmed, Director, Research, CIRDAP
- 11:20: Observations of the GC delegates from the CMCs
- 12:30: Lunch Break
- 14:00: Designated Discussant
- Dr. Q. Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Member, General Economics Division, Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 - Dr. R. Radhakirshna, Director, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai, India
 - Ms. Hua Du, Country Director, Asian Development Bank, Dhaka
- 14:45: Open Discussion
- 15:45: Wrap-up and Closing Remarks by the Chairperson
- 15:50: Refreshments
- 15:55: Meet the Press (separate programme prepared)