



**Standing Committee  
for Economic and Commercial Cooperation  
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)**

## **TARGETING MECHANISMS OF THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET SYSTEMS IN THE COMCEC REGION**



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The resurgence of interest in social protection policy in general and Social Safety Nets (SSNs) in particular has been a response to the persistence of extreme poverty in many countries and the perceived need for a response to global economic crises. Building more effective SSNs would promote economic opportunity and enhance the productive capacity of the poor to overcome poverty.

Despite the fact that the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to halve global poverty from the 1990 level has been reached a few years ahead of the target date of 2015, large numbers of people still live under conditions of poverty. Even using the World Bank's conservative extreme poverty line measure (US\$1.25 per day at 2005 prices), current projections suggest that more than 1.2 billion people globally will fall below this in 2015.

Furthermore, US\$2 per day is the average national poverty line for all developing countries and offers only a very frugal standard of living. It is well below what is considered an appropriate poverty line in middle income countries. Thus whilst there has been a trend decline in poverty over the last 30 years the focus of the COMCEC on poverty reduction in its members countries remains highly relevant to the lives of millions of poor people.

This Study assesses the effectiveness and impact of SSNs targeting in relation to poverty. It brings together new evidence, most notably data from a selective sample of countries, to analyse methods of targeting and any problems associated with leakage or under-coverage in the COMCEC member countries. The 57 COMCEC member states are geographically dispersed over four continents. For analytical purposes and to allow comparison of similar and different COMCEC member countries in relation to socio-economic and political formation, countries are classified into four groupings based on income group. However, income poverty is considered to be insufficient for measuring poverty and for the purposes of exploring the current targeting mechanisms of SSNs in the COMCEC member countries. In this regard, UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) is also used for analysis of different countries.

The findings from this study show that, despite their increasing use, a large number of the COMCEC member countries' population remain uncovered by social safety nets.

The study indicates that an agenda to improve targeting mechanisms and to reduce leakage and under-coverage such that the cost effectiveness of poverty-oriented SSN programmes should be supported. This will be driven by initiatives to enhance the capacity of member countries to understand and monitor poverty on the basis of improved and reliable data. Moreover the report explains how social protection policy and social safety nets can play an important role in delivering pro-poor growth in the COMCEC member states subject to effective targeting mechanisms.

The key challenge facing COMCEC countries is to ensure that tangible links exist between equity and the practical policy planning and implementation of social protection and social safety nets. As a framework this could establish long-term goals for both preventative and reactive SSNs. In a development context SSNs are key component of a broader social protection strategy and are increasingly central to the post-MDG development agenda.

### Social Safety Nets and Targeting Mechanism in the COMCEC Member States

The first chapter provides a brief overview of broader conception of social protection, social safety nets, and targeting mechanism in various contexts. It also sets out the methodology and data sources of this review. Chapter two explores social safety nets and targeting mechanism in the COMCEC member states, providing an analytical overview of the strengths and weaknesses of targeting mechanisms deployed by different programmes.

Chapter three focuses on countries categorised as low income and lower-middle income countries, as there is a considerable similarity in their experience of poverty and SSNs. The analysis primarily draws on case studies of three low income countries - Mozambique, Niger and Sierra Leone and lower middle Income Countries - Cameroon, Egypt, Nigeria and Senegal. Chapter four examines SSNs in middle income groups, most of which are considered to have a High Human Development Index. The analysis

primarily draws on case studies of three middle income Countries – Iran, Turkey and Tunisia.

Chapter five provides evidence from three high income COMCEC countries enjoying abundant natural resources (mainly oil and gas).

### **The Way Forward: Recommendations**

Chapter six summarises the study's findings, followed by recommendations that would improve how SSN targeting mechanisms function.

- Building Institutional Capacity – to improve SSN design and implementation to improve targeting and reduce leakage.
- Identifying the Poor; Implementing appropriate targeting mechanisms linked to good quality data.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Put systems in place to understand what works and to share best practice.
- Holding Governments to account: Increase expenditure on social protection and social safety nets and involve local people in their development and implementation.

