Household Economic Well-being Advancement through the BCG Model

The 15ᵗʰ National Health Assembly, having considered the report on the Household Economic Well-Being Advancement through the BCG Model,[1]

Realizes that the poverty situations of the grassroots households encompass non-income dimensions such as lack of access to basic minimum needs due to personal problems as well as economic and social structures. Some have no access to housing while others lack education opportunities, public health services, state welfare and social support. Risks faced by the poor are diverse and vary depending on the region. It is necessary to collect precise data on the poor and create common understanding among all involved organizations in order to design an effective solution system both at the policy and implementation levels, and to come up with an index monitoring system to correspond to current situations and in collaboration with the monitoring systems of the civil society sector;

Acknowledges that there are many organizations and networks responsible for poverty eradication planning and implementation to improve the quality of life of people at the grassroots level. The governmental administrative organizations at the regional, local and community levels with good understanding of local contexts also play key roles in translating the policy into practice and integrating the work of all local parties involved;

Appreciates that the government sector has taken the lead role in integrating the implementation of poverty eradication by stipulating national policies and developing the Thai People Map and Analytics Platform (TPMAP) as a tool to identify the targeted poor population to provide specific and responsive support to specific problems more precisely than in the past. This is coupled with the setting up of Poverty Eradication and Life Cycle Development (PELCD) centres at the local level that work in alignment with the 'sufficiency economy'. The TPMAP data will be used by all provinces to design poverty eradication plans at the community and household levels. It is also necessary to raise awareness and communicate through every channel/platform to reach all targeted groups;

Is concerned that the work of implementing organizations may overlap and that the poor population database may not be accurate or updated, in particular regarding the classification of the targeted poor. Some of the poor may be left out of the survey while those who are able to escape from poverty may still be included, which are among the reasons why the problem

solving is not fully effective. Data integration and planning with local and community participation is therefore required for poverty eradication. Data should be updated for maximum efficiency in monitoring and evaluation. In addition, participation and integration is key; state, academic, private and civil society sectors need to work together with local people on community strength so that communities can stand on their own feet after the government supports have been withdrawn or projects completed. This is when local and community supporting tools come into play, either in mentoring or networking. The ultimate aim is to empower people to be active citizens, becoming an integrative part of moving the country towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in economic, social and environmental dimensions;

Acknowledges and Supports the BCG Model, highlighting quality economic and social growth through internal strength, and capitalizing on the country's strengths in biodiversity and cultural richness to enhance knowledge, technology and innovations to transform Thailand to a value-based and innovation-driven economy. The aim is to narrow inequalities to ensure local grassroots communities have access to employment, incomes and new business opportunities, as well as state welfare and support;

Realizes that the BCG Model and the draft of the 2021-2027 National Development Implementation Plan through the BCG model put the focus on household economic advancement. However, the implementation process needs to take into consideration sustainable development at the community level, to align with the United Nation (UN)'s SDGs and not contradict previous NHA resolutions;

Realizes the NHA network's concern that the interpretation of the concept of the BCG Model and the draft of the 2021-2027 National Development Implementation Plan is likely to lead to unsustainable development at both social and community levels. Some topics may be inconsistent with previous NHA resolutions. Examples include the efforts in amending the Plant Varieties Protection Act to protect plants with unfair shares by not allowing farmers to conserve seeds for future plantation; the Biosafety Act relating to the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) which may have impacts on the biosafety of Thai farmers; the imports of waste with the claim of reuse of industrial waste, which may also mean imports of hazardous and plastic wastes; the land use issue that allows leases on forest lands; carbon credit trading; and the international medical hub that stresses treatment instead of wellness as advertised, which may result in brain drain from the national healthcare system;

Agreeing that the "Household Economic Well-Being Advancement through the BCG Model" policy shall lead to sustainable growth and Thai people's well-being with the balanced

development of economy, society, politics and environment in parallel with the conservation of Thai uniqueness and efficient use of resources. This can be achieved by building awareness among Thai people to shift their mindsets and working processes for efficient administrative national management by applying the right knowledge, technology, and resources that best suit their communities. Each household needs to be supported to have immunity and resilience to change;

Appreciates the Health Assembly in Sakon Nakhon province in the flagship model of the "Household Economic Well-Being Advancement through the BCG Model".

Thereby, adopted the policy statement:

This public policy puts a focus on empowering all parties at all levels of society, including the state, academic, and business sectors as well as civil society and the public sector to participate in the eradication of poverty, which impacts health, society, the economy and the environment. The approach is structural integration and attention to specific contexts of specific regions through the Bio-Circular-Green Economy (BCG) Model for inclusive and sustainable development.   The BCG model blends science, technology and innovations with natural, religious and cultural capitals in a way that is not contradictory to the solutions of the previous NHAs to create opportunities for household economic advancement at the grassroots level. The BCG model aims to achieve financial management by increasing incomes while reducing expenses through 1) Developing the targeted poor population data management system aimed at precision poverty alleviation, in parallel with researching the causes of poverty; 2) Integrating implementation mechanisms in poverty eradication at the local level based on the BCG Model; 3) Empowering the people by upgrading occupational skills, creating BCG entrepreneurs and communities as a solution to poverty; and 4) Restructuring management and mechanisms to foster equal opportunities for the grassroots population.   All these strategies centre on social participation and responsibility of all parties, which result in a people-powered network leading to new mindsets and behaviours, as well as working approaches towards healthy and environmentally friendly communities. All people have equality in learning, educational and social opportunities. The target is sustainable growth at both the social and community levels, lessening inequalities, upgrading households' quality of life, and eliminating poverty across generations through structural integration management. The interpretation of the concept of the BCG Model and the implementation must not lead to unsustainable development at either

the social and community levels, but must conform with the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) which is the key principle of Thailand's social and economic development.

The core contents of the policy statement are as follows:

1. Developing the targeted poor population data management system aimed at precise poverty alleviation, in parallel with researching the causes of poverty

    1.1 To set clear definitions and indicators of people, potentials, and economic and social status. This is because different organizations have different classifications of the poor, which is confusing and may overlap. A clear and cohesive understanding of poverty in terms of meaning, scope and implementation directions is required among all implementing parties for maximum efficiency in poverty eradication.

    1.2 To improve the Thai People Map and Analytics Platform (TPMAP) for accuracy to show both problems and five kinds of capital, namely human, social, financial, physical, and natural resources and environmental capital. This should be coupled with cross surveys and triangulation of the poor population data by a working team from the academic and civil society sectors through in-depth interviews and participatory observations for validation of data. This also supports empowerment in the implementation process to answer the real needs of local communities. Empirical research of the targeted poor at the household or individual levels is required for the poor population database system to identify those who need urgent support or those who need to be transferred to state welfare. An accurate database will also help improve the basic infrastructure currently impeding opportunities to escape the poverty trap, and support the family and village profile databases of the poor population. The cross survey and triangulation shall be carried out by the Poverty Eradication and Life Cycle Development (PELCD) centres at the local level and in local communities with the participation of local leaders. Moreover, an accurate database can reduce redundancy in receiving welfare, including "welfare leakage" to those who are not the real targets and "those who are missed out". It also supports management of human development throughout their lifecycle, thereby providing more responsive actions and solutions for specific local contexts and potentials of the targeted poor.

    1.3 To prepare the poor population database and analysis report with a dashboard showing local implementation outcomes through integration of data of related organizations/networks and with the data of the SDGs. The report shall be in an open-data form to be accessed by relevant organizations and educational institutions for data verification, follow-up of

implementation progress, and further problem-solving planning, as well as further development of strategies in dimensions beyond poverty.

2. Integrating implementation mechanisms in poverty eradication at the local level based on the BCG Model

2.1 To set the "Household Economic Well-being Advancement through the BCG Model" as a national agenda and provincial development agendas, highlighting shared prosperity to communities through multisectoral actions and synergy of the state, academic, private, civil society and public sectors.

2.2 To design targeted development strategies and poverty eradication implementation plans for specific provinces, and to integrate referral mechanisms to assist the poor, the vulnerable, the disabled and the underprivileged with access to the government welfare system, the basic needs infrastructure, and income opportunities for better quality of life. Relevant organizations at all levels need to take responsibility based on their functions, with a focus on collaboration with local organizations. Meanwhile, local people and responsible organizations have the chance to take part in designing policies, targets, indexes, and methods suitable for the needs, capacities and local identities to bring about change and growth. The local development strategies require joint Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), a crucial tool in integrative implementation among involved state organizations, as well as measuring concrete successes and impacts.

2.3 To propose that provincial governors take the lead in poverty eradication integration by coordinating and connecting existing mechanisms, i.e. the Poverty Eradication and Life Cycle Development (PELCD) centres, local administrative organizations (LAOs), special local administrative organizations, District Health Board (DHB), village committees, and relevant parties in the state, academic, private, civil society, and public sectors. Moreover, poverty eradication projects should be set up in alignment with the SDGs through flexible and agile local working teams, who are assigned specific roles, responsibilities and budgets. Monitoring and evaluation should be conducted while performance should be reported to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

3. Empowering the people by upgrading occupational skills, creating BCG entrepreneurs and communities as a solution to poverty

3.1 To create equal opportunities in lifelong learning based on the BCG Model, promoting knowledge and understanding of the BCG Model relating to cultural and natural dimensions, as well as empowering people in their own personal healthcare management.

3.2 To support relevant organizations in skill trainings/workshops for the underprivileged and the vulnerable to be equipped with health, financial, and digital literacy, and entrepreneurial skills.

3.3 To set up occupation/BCG entrepreneurs promotion centres for poverty eradication at the provincial and community levels that suit community capacity and readiness. Local educational institutions can serve as common spaces to provide new skill/upskill/reskill training for the poor, the vulnerable, the disabled and the underprivileged. Employment can be created through collaboration with local businesses. This should be carried out in tandem with the development of a strong consumer protection system to ensure quality products and services be recognized nationally and internationally while meeting the real needs and capacities of local communities. Additionally, local people should be empowered to be resilient and effectively navigate through potential adversity and risks of social and economic uncertainties and natural disasters. The training courses should be flexible to match future situations and technologies.

3.4 To empower occupational groups and the OTOP Inno-Life to become BCG community enterprises and register as juristic persons for doing business, and facilitate them in accessing state support such as low-interest loans, business and financial management skills, technology support, and marketing.

3.5 To develop BCG communities through the sandbox model to support cross-functional collaboration, such as the community forests for the poverty reduction project, the Waste Bank - Circular Community, the Tree Bank Project, the Community Power Energy Fund, the Underground Water Bank, the Rice Bank, the Land Bank, the Seed Bank, community ecotourism, and the BCG farmers' market. These projects should be promoted as businesses to create employment linking the poor with local BCG entrepreneurs, and to promote a pro-poor BCG value chain in compliance with the SDGs and not in contradiction to the resolutions of previous NHAs.

3.6 To support the local private sector in connecting market mechanisms that enable participation of grassroots households, farmers and the poor, such as online markets, access to leading entrepreneurs/department stores and government markets. Mindsets of the people should be shifted from "marketing-led production" to "production-led marketing" to meet customer needs. People and businesses in communities need to be empowered to be social-minded entrepreneurs. This can be done by collaboration with universities or research institutes who can conduct market research and design training programs based on specific needs of local people in order to develop products/services that have sustainable demands.

3.7 To promote social enterprises to take part in poverty eradication in their communities by joining state projects and co-designing the implementation plans for sustainable growth.

3.8 To support change agents and new generations to participate in taking actions to solve local problems. Local change agents as leaders can build good relationships with communities, get involved in their work over the long term, and connect with the state, academic and private sectors.

4. Restructuring management and mechanisms to foster equal opportunities for the grassroots population.

4.1 To support management and mechanisms of non-governmental, non-profit organizations, public organizations and private, academic and civil society sectors who participate in local sustainable development by facilitating access to different types of funding and proper financial tools to boost their capacities in marketing, research and other relevant skills.

4.2 To adjust budget allocation for poverty eradication, grassroots economic empowerment, and sustainable development through the BCG Model, by taking into consideration the budget allocation criteria, which consists of the population size of the province, average annual income per household, ratio of poor population in the province, Human Achievement Index, as well as the geographical and environmental conditions of each province to compensate for or reduce differences in equitable budget allocation.

4.3 To support and develop microfinancing to ensure the poor population have equal access to financial resources, and to promote development of mechanisms for proper and adequate funding opportunities such as grants, and matching grants through the 4-3-2-1 funding strategy used in the new rural development plan where 40% of funds come from the government, 30% from loans, 20% co-investment by business companies and the remaining 10% from local co-investment and lending. Types of microfinancing and funding may vary, depending on local policies and contexts.

4.4 To ensure adequate incomes to cover basic minimum needs for the underprivileged and the vulnerable who cannot do conventional work and have no access to development opportunities.

4.5 To expand the scope of supporting village funds and all community development funds to cover all areas in the poverty eradication strategy for community sustainable growth based on the BCG Model.

4.6 To take urgent action on legal reforms to eliminate unjust regulations for fairer land allocation/ownership system, tax system, pension scheme, good governance for market opportunities/income distribution, grassroots economic upgradation, and protection for local people's occupation, living and earning spaces. The legal reforms should be carried out in such a way as to avoid injustice and inequality, such as those relating to the native plant varieties protection, biosafety, carbon credits trading, medical hub management with a focus beyond treatment, industrial waste import, biomass power projects with impacts on community rights, and hazardous waste management businesses with impacts on community health.

Hereby, adopted the following resolutions:

1. Members of the National Health Assembly agreed on the policy statement and the core contents of the "Household economic well-being advancement through the Bio-Circular-Green model" as proposed.

2. Members of the National Health Assembly requested a report on the outcomes of the implementation of the NHA solutions to be submitted to the National Health Commission; monitoring and evaluation shall be conducted for improvement of public policies that correspond with future situations in 2023 and 2024.