

SUMMARY REPORT ON THE MISSION TO CHINA MARCH 2010

1. BACKGROUND

China is in the process of setting up a first tier compulsory social protection system to cover the entire population both in urban and rural areas. This is a huge project which will take several more years to complete (at least until 2020). However, we have seen a strong desire to succeed and use experiences in other countries as a source of ideas.

As regards supplementary cover, this is provided to certain groups (mainly civil servants including teachers) by the state and to employees of private companies by private, profit-making insurance companies. The level of cover for teachers is inadequate and may require an additional voluntary contribution.

Finally, we should emphasise that cooperation with foreign, public and private experts is an important political and strategic issue and one which is well understood by the French government. The French model is among those studied closely along with the German and Italian models, and Europe as a whole is working with China in a 'Euro-China' project managed by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

2. THE STAKEHOLDERS

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security is responsible for reforming social protection systems while the health minister is responsible for reforming hospitals. The MOHRSS is a very active stronghold both on a national and provincial level.

Furthermore, the contribution of the higher education sector is very important in preparing reforms.

With particular regard to education, the National Education Ministry and the Chinese National Unified Trade Union have a part to play in managing supplementary insurance for teachers and researchers.

3. OUR POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION

Three things have emerged from the various meetings at central level in Beijing and Wuhan:

- a. **The supplementary health insurance model as experienced for example by the MGEN is clearly of interest to all the stakeholders we met**, since the MOHRSS 'stronghold' gave us a very warm welcome, whereas others have found it very difficult to penetrate.
- b. **In terms of timing, we have arrived at exactly the right time:**
 - in the process, to take part in a study phase on supplementary insurance. This has not yet fully started, as the first tier of health insurance is the priority.
 - in the year, during the Communist Party National Congress, for which one of the major topics is social protection, in particular for teachers (50 million people affected!)
- c. **As regards methodology and possible actions, a threefold approach should be taken:**

- At national level to convince both the MOHRSS and no doubt the Ministry of Education of the importance and relevance of the mutual society model for supplementary insurance;
- At provincial level with a potential study and subsequent testing in Wuhan involving the university and the Provincial Social Security Directorate, and potential cooperation with the Network in terms of studies, training and research on supplementary solidarity-based social protection;
- With the French authorities and other stakeholders (Euro-China programme, GIP SPSI etc) to coordinate actions, particularly in terms of coherent lobbying using a model based on elements of the French/European system.

4. THE NEXT STEPS

On our return from China, we must demonstrate to our contacts that we are interested in cooperation through specific proposals:

a. At national level:

- By proposing cooperation with the MOHRSS research centre and the Central University of Finance and Economics on issues regarding drugs and medical prescriptions;
- By using our contact Mr HAO to make contact with the National Education Ministry on issues relating to supplementary social protection for teachers;
- By informing the embassy of steps we have taken.

b. At provincial level:

- By confirming to the Social Security Directorate and the University of Wuhan our interest in a study of the feasibility of supplementary insurance or an additional voluntary contribution in the form of a mutual society, which may lead to testing;
- By suggesting that Mr DENG and the University of Wuhan join the Education and Solidarity Network to tie them into our international executive training programmes on mutual society-based supplementary cover.

c. As regards our organisation

- By involving a team within the MGEN and/or the Network (depending on the topics) in each of the aspects;
- By identifying possible funding to implement the proposed actions (France, Europe, ILO)
- By keeping the government informed and keeping abreast of other ongoing actions.

All these actions will be coordinated by the Delegate General of the Education and Solidarity Network with the focus on mobilisation and responsiveness to ensure that opportunities which have arisen thus far are not wasted.