



ข่าวเศรษฐกิจและสังคม

สำนักงานเลขาธิการ

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Thailand's Social Development in Q4/2013 and the Year 2013

Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) released the official report on Thailand's social development in the fourth quarter and the year 2013. Details of the situation are as follows.

Social situations and indicators in Q4/2013 and the year 2013

In all, employment declined and unemployment rate slightly increased while income from salaries and wages rose. As for health condition, it was apparent that the number of patients diagnosed with diseases under National Communicable Disease Surveillance System experienced a downtrend. However, it is still necessary to conduct the surveillance on pneumonia and influenza diseases. Meanwhile, overall situation in crime problems steadily improved despite the increase in narcotics cases. Key social issues needed to be scrutinized and watch closely include child and teenagers problems, chronic illnesses, household's income, expenditure and debts as well as human trafficking

Employment and income

In the fourth quarter of 2013, employment declined by 1.1 percent both in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. Unemployment rate was recorded at 0.65 percent. Wages and salaries in the private sector excluding overtime pay and other benefits increased by 8.7 percent compared with the same period of last year. Due to a 1.7 percent rise in price levels, wages and salaries of the private sector after deducted by inflation increased by 6.9 percent. Labor productivity in the fourth quarter rose by 1.7 percent. Meanwhile, the indicators revealed that despite the fact that employment declined and unemployment increased in the first quarter following the economic slowdown, **overall employment in 2013** experienced a slight decline of only 0.05 percent. Nevertheless, unemployment rate remained low at 0.72 percent similar to average rate of 0.7 percent in the past two years. Wages and salaries in the private sector excluding overtime pay and other benefits in 2013 went up by 10.2 percent while real wages and labor productivity grew by 7.8 and 2.9 percent respectively.

Employment prospect in 2014. The Thai economy is expected to expand by 3-4 percent, lower than the previous projection of 4-5 percent. This indicates an uptrend of employment. Key supporting factor associated with employment and household income was export of goods that are expected to grow faster than expected. However, some downside risks which might undermine employment include

export performance, the delay in public investment projects, deterioration in business and consumer confidences and the political disturbance. In addition, the drought condition is likely to become more severe due to low water level in dams and will inevitably affect employment and farm income. Also, it is important to arrange the labor market environment to become favorable and well-prepared for the labor liberalization among ASEAN countries including employment-related regulations, labor protection and skill enhancement for labor force.

Health condition

The number of patients diagnosed with diseases under disease surveillance continued to decline while the respiratory infectious diseases remained important risks and still needed to be followed closely. The number of patients under disease surveillance dropped by 25.1 percent compared with the fourth quarter of 2012. In 2013, the number of patients rose by 8.9 percent compared to 2012. Patients with dengue fever were recorded double in numbers due to a continued epidemic since the third quarter of 2012 mostly seen in group of students aged 10-14 years. At the same time, the surveillance is required to cover pneumonia and influenza diseases that have been widespread since the early 2014 because of a lingering winter season as well as the bird flu outbreak in China. Meanwhile, illnesses from the chronic non-communicable diseases were on their uptrend. In 2012, the incidence of high blood pressure disease increased by 9.7 percent compared to 2011 followed by diabetes, ischemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, and cancer with 8.6, 3.7, 7.4, and 6.2 percent growth rate respectively. Cancer still remained the first leading cause of death due mainly to changing life styles which lead to inappropriate health behaviors.

Spending on alcohol consumption declined from 43,526 million baht in the fourth quarter of 2012 to 39,664 million baht in the fourth quarter of 2013 or declining by 8.9 percent. This owed to reduction in liquor and beer sales due partly to an increase in excise tax on liquor and beer effective since 4 September 2013 which led to increases in liquor and beer prices of 7-8 percent. **Similarly, expenses on smoking increased** from 4,682 million baht in the fourth quarter of 2012 to 4,734 million baht in the same quarter of 2013 or up by 1.1 percent in line with expansion of cigarette sales from Thailand Tobacco Monopoly factory. Moreover, there was a low base effect of cigarette sales in the same quarter of last year resulting from increasing prices after the excise tax hike in the third quarter of 2012.

Security in life and assets

The number of crime cases dropped while narcotics cases climbed up negligibly. In the fourth quarter of 2013, total numbers of 118,904 crime cases were reported, decreasing by 0.6 percent compared with the same quarter of last year. The narcotics cases served the largest share of about 85.1 percent to total crime cases, 0.8 percent higher than that of in the fourth quarter of last year. In 2013, there were 434,557 narcotics cases reported, showing an expansion of 19.7 percent compared to 2012. It is thus necessary to push intensive efforts on reinforcing the protection and suppression measures on drug

dealers and end users in order to reduce the number of drug users/ drug addicts.

Road accidents decreased, however, the campaign on safety helmet use is required to carry on seriously. In the fourth quarter of 2013, the number of deaths from road accidents dropped by 24.4 percent compared with the same period of last year. In 2013, the number of deaths declined by 9.1 percent compared to 2012. During the 2014 New Year festive, there were 3,174 accidents, growing by 0.3 percent from 2013 while the number of injured and deaths were 3,345 and 366 persons respectively. Major causes were still from reckless driving over a legal speed limit and motorcycle riding without wearing safety helmet. It is therefore needed to continue campaigning on safety helmet use throughout the year as well as to enforce the traffic law more strictly.

Key social development issues

Development of child and teenagers. There are several child and teenagers problems urged to be solved including child nutrition, access to education provision with full coverage and better quality, and teenage pregnancy. On the nutrition front, over- and under-nutrition in impoverished children can affect the development of the brain and immune system. Regarding the education, it was apparent that Thai children have not yet fully obtained basic educational level especially those in the upper secondary level that were recorded at only 73.18 percent enrollment rate. Moreover, the educational achievement remained low. According to the 2012 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the results showed that scores in mathematics, reading and science were all lower than the average scores in each individual subject. As for the teenage pregnancy problem, there has been an increase in the number while the average age was found younger. Teenage mother aged 15-19 years old had higher childbearing rate per thousand female population with the same age group increased from the rate of 50.1 in 2008 to 53.8 in 2012. Moreover, it was found that there has been increasing prevalence of premarital sex particularly among female teenagers but still with low pregnancy prevention. It is therefore required to develop child and teenagers since announcing pregnancy both in terms of health and education by offering essential nutrient for mother and child, providing appropriate nutrition, supporting non-education related expenses for poor children to continue in the educational system, and arranging suitable educational pattern for reducing the school dropout rates among teenage mothers.

Household income, expenditure and debts. Socio-Economic Survey conducted by the National Statistical Office revealed that monthly household income in the first half of 2013 expanded by 4.6 percent. In the meantime, average household expenditure and household debts increased by 5.2 and 8.7 percent respectively. Nevertheless, the proportion of household with debt burden dropped from 55.8 percent in 2011 to 54.4 in 2013. Increasing household debts were mainly contributed by 17.0 percent annual growth of debts from purchasing or leasing house and land, 7.8 percent annual growth of debts from consumption (including debts from purchasing car under the first-time-car-buyer scheme), and 3.4 percent annual growth of debts from agriculture. During the latter half of 2013, household spending and debts creation tend to slowdown. Key indicators also suggested similar trend in which that private

consumption declined by 2.9 percent in tandem with a continual decline in commercial banks' credits for personal consumption since the first quarter of the year. At the end of the fourth quarter of 2013, loan outstanding totaled 3.2 trillion baht or 11.6 percent growth, slowing down from 21.6 percent at the end of the fourth quarter of 2012. However, debt default rate rose which can be seen from mounting non-performing loans (NPLs) of personal consumption of about 26.6 percent growth. In addition, credit default of over three months increased by 45.8 percent or accounted for about 10,920 million baht. The unpaid credit card balance of over 3 months also increased by 31.3 percent. These figures were accounted for only small proportion of total credit. Nevertheless, they indicated that households' ability to pay back debts became worsened. In 2014, new debt creation or existing debt repayment will depend on the economic trend and increases in salaries and wages of labor.

Thailand is placed on Tier 2 Watch List for the fourth consecutive year since 2010 as Thailand has been relieved of its obligation regarding human trafficking and required to provide the progress report on additional guidelines and measures that Thailand adopted for protecting and preventing human trafficking. Nevertheless, in 2013, Thailand made further progress by accelerating the procedures to tackle human trafficking problems in response to the US's recommendation which will be incorporated into the Trafficking in Persons Report 2014 conducted by the US Department of State. Major implementations of anti-human trafficking activities include the fight against human trafficking in fishery industrial sector, the system management for foreign workers, the integration of social assistance services for children, women, elderly and disabled persons under "One stop crisis center (OSCC), known as a social assistance center", the acceleration of the prosecution and conviction process for human traffickers and government officials involved in trafficking-related corruption, the tracking of convicted offenders or perpetrators to receive criminal penalties, the segregation of human trafficking victims, and the enactment of the Anti-Transnational Organized Crime Act of 2013 to facilitate more efficient investigation and prosecution on human trafficking cases related to the transnational organized crime.

Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB)

24 February 2014

Key social indicators

Components	2011	2012	2013	2013			
	Year	Year	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Human quality							
1.1 Employment^{1/}							
Workforce (Thousands)	38,922	39,409	39,395	39,134	39,489	39,467	39,491
%YOY	0.72	1.25	-0.02	1.04	0.69	-0.94	-0.84
Employed person (Thousands)	38,465	38,941	38,919	38,516	38,912	39,112	39,135
%YOY	1.12	1.24	-0.05	1.32	0.85	-1.18	-1.12
Unemployed person (Thousands)	264.3	258.8	284.0	280.5	292.1	305.6	257.9
Unemployment rate (%)	0.68	0.66	0.72	0.72	0.74	0.77	0.65
Underemployed person (Thousands)	383.3	347.4	336.6	393.8	277.6	327.5	347.6
1.2 Health							
Number of patients under disease surveillance (cases) ^{2/}							
- Measles	3,156 (22.2)	5,207 (65.0)	2,642 (-49.3)	937	793	619	293
- Meningococcal Meningitis	22 (-21.4)	8 (-63.6)	15 (87.5)	3	3	2	7
- Japanese encephalitis	572 (32.7)	680 (18.9)	724 (6.5)	182	187	177	178
- Cholera	281 (-82.4)	45 (-84.0)	8 (-82.2)	4	1	1	2
- Hand, food and mouth	18,196 (46.1)	45,297 (148.9)	45,853 (1.2)	9,624	8,872	17,942	9,415
- Dysentery	14,274 (-8.9)	13,094 (-8.3)	9,425 (-28.0)	2,679	2,708	2,441	1,597
- Pneumonia	179,976 (5.6)	195,940 (8.9)	184,147 (-6.0)	55,277	35,374	49,577	43,919
- Leptospirosis	4,261 (-13.8)	4,275 (0.3)	3,047 (-28.7)	634	626	963	824
- Dengue fever	69,800 (-40.3)	79,593 (14.0)	152,768 (91.9)	21,879	52,131	64,734	14,024
- Influenza	62,112 (-46.1)	62,100 (0.0)	43,791 (-29.5)	17,372	6,084	11,591	8,744
- Rabies	7 (-53.3)	5 (-28.6)	6 (20.0)	1	3	2	-
Numbers of patients with chronic non-communicable diseases (cases)							
- High blood pressure	920,106 (7.0)	1,009,382 (9.7)	n.a.	No quarterly data available			
- Ischaemic heart disease	264,877 (4.7)	274,753 (3.7)	n.a.				
- Cerebrovascular disease	212,186 (8.2)	227,848 (7.4)	n.a.				
- Diabetes	621,411 (2.2)	674,826 (8.6)	n.a.				
- Cancer and tumors	408,830 (6.0)	434,166 (6.2)	n.a.				
2. Social security							
- Patients from road accidents (cases)	9,065	7,634	6,938	2,171	1,720	1,470	1,577
- Crime against person (cases)	25,478	24,972	23,573	6,135	6,246	5,685	5,547
- Property crimes (cases)	50,545	49,752	49,853	12,511	12,223	12,892	1,227
- Narcotics (cases)	345,950	363,174	434,557	110,569	110,711	112,107	101,170
3. Consumer protection^{3/}							
3.1 Number of complaints (cases)	7,422	9,464	n.a.	2,380	1,488	1,609	n.a.
- House, building, land	2,927	3,547	n.a.	758	663	632	n.a.
- Products and services	3,121	4,024	n.a.	759	555	709	n.a.
- Advertisement	1,257	2,012	n.a.	310	233	244	n.a.
- Direct sales and direct marketing	117	15	n.a.	12	31	24	n.a.
3.2 Hot line 1166 (cases)	61,242	60,982	n.a.	10,321	10,314	12,348	n.a.

Note: Labor data in Q4 is an average of October-December 2013

Source: 1/ Labor force survey report, National Statistical Office, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology

2/ Bureau of Epidemiology, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Health

3/ Office of the Consumer Protection Board, Office of the Prime Minister