

Singapore should measure poverty but not only by monetary means: report

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SINGAPORE, Nov. 11 (Xinhua) -- A report on measuring poverty produced by a local university said that Singapore should consider officially defining poverty, but not solely in monetary terms.

Most Singaporeans are not aware of the country's scale of poverty due to lack of information, local broadcaster Channel NewsAsia on Monday quoted the report as saying.

The report *Measuring Poverty in Singapore: Frameworks for Consideration*, by The Lien Center for Social Innovation and the School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University, said that a framework on measuring poverty could lead to greater public support to address the needs of the vulnerable.

But it added that there are limitations to defining poverty by monetary means, such as through household income.

"The question is whether this person is capable, (or) has the capabilities to lift (himself or herself) out of poverty," said John A. Donaldson, associate professor of political science at the university.

"What we are calling for is more a qualitative research on different groups of people who have unmet needs, and looking more specifically at how those people experience poverty."

Channel NewsAsia quoted the government as having said that it wants to help people across an entire spectrum, and that it may be a hindrance if it is to have a defined poverty line.

Chan Chun Sing, minister for social and family development, said that it would be "very dangerous" to do that because there will be other groups of people who may also need help but may not get the assistance.

"We need to be more sophisticated in the way we assess the needs and to make sure that we deliver help consistently to the people," he said.