

Side Event of the UN Commission for Social Development 2021
Building Roofs and Raising Floors Through Inclusive Digital Technologies and
A Global Fund for Social Protection
12 February, 2021; 8:30am – 9:45am EST

Talking points of speakers

1. Minister Kitir Belgium

Dear friends,

It is an honor to be here with you today. So thank you for inviting me to share a few words with you. As you know, this event is part of a series of side events parallel to the official proceedings of the United Nations Commission for Social Development.

Social Development. Let us reflect a few seconds on these 2 words.

These 2 words evoke positivism and optimism. These 2 words evoke progress.

But today, there's a reality that challenges all of this. That reality is named COVID.

COVID undid the progress of the last decade. 100 million people, or even many more,

*are being pushed back into extreme poverty. Due to COVID, worldwide, we do not progress on social development. No. It's the complete opposite, we are facing **social regression**.*

And the reason for this regression goes beyond the pandemic.

In Belgium, we have all been able to appreciate the importance of our social protection system. Allowing access to quality health care and to guarantee income, and therefore food and housing for families. Even in the most difficult times.

But for too many there is no such social protection.

*Actually, a **social safety net** is lacking for most people on the planet.*

Social safety nets not only provide short term solutions in case of crisis.

*They also break the never-ending cycle of **poverty** and vulnerability, they empower people.*

Therefore, as Belgian Minister of Development Cooperation,

I launched a first initiative, a new thematic program in Central Africa, in order to strengthen social protection mechanisms.

Of course this Belgian initiative is just one drop in the ocean, but, dear all: for social protection, EVERY drop counts.

However, we need to go much further. Low income countries need 78 billion dollars to close the financing gap for their social protection systems.

We cannot solve this by ourselves, but let us do our part.

My compatriot, professor De Schutter, the United Nations' special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, with whom I am honored to share this tribune,

has been studying and advocating a Global Fund for Social Protection.

Well, such a Global Fund is I believe exactly the sort of answer that the world needs to draw the lessons from the COVID crisis.

And those lessons are: affordable universal health care, proper housing, education for children, a guaranteed income in case of crisis like this pandemic. All these things should not be privileges, luxuries.

No, these are rights, basic human rights.

*The virus knows no borders. **And so, in response, our solidarity should not be confined by borders.** My first masterclass in solidarity was my first job, more than 20 years ago.*

On a factory floor assembling cars. On the floor as a trade union representative, in order to defend my colleagues and their rights.

Today, we could say my task is to protect social rights worldwide. I know that might sound quite ambitious. Even more reason to do this together.

A global fund for social protection, properly funded and managed, might be the tool we need. Because we are all in this together.

Thank you very much.

2. State Secretary Ruuth Finland

- I would like to thank the Organizers for this very timely discussion. I am happy to share with you some experiences from Finland.

Homelessness

- In Finland, we see ending homelessness in a wider context of **social protection** and universal social and health services.
- Finland has a goal of **cutting homelessness in half** by 2023, and eradicating it by 2027. We are investing more on social and health services, social security, education, and green economy.
- Since the mid 1980's tackling homelessness has almost continuously been a **focus of Government programs** in Finland. During recent years Finland has been the only country in Europe where homelessness has **decreased**.
- Since 2008, the national housing strategy has been based on the **Housing First principle**. It has proved to be effective. Traditionally, housing has been seen as the final goal of a social recovery process. Housing First shifts the paradigm. The idea is simple: to give people permanent housing and the support they need as soon as they become homeless. When a person has a roof securely over their head, it is easier to focus on solving other problems.
- Furthermore, we have to improve both **early stage prevention** and support for people in the risk of homelessness.
- **Affordable housing** is a key element in **inclusion**. In preventing homelessness, we need to provide flexible social services, financial and housing guidance, together with affordable housing.
- **Social protection systems** are important in preventing and fighting homelessness. Universal cash benefits can play an important role in safeguarding individual autonomy by providing means to proper housing for those who would lack sufficient resources otherwise. In Finland, in addition to other risk-based benefits, we have in place a general housing allowance benefit that is paid to any household that fulfills the means-tested eligibility criteria.
- The most important lesson is that homelessness is not inevitable, it can be ended. It is a realistic goal, both ethically and also economically justified. It **requires a wide partnership**, all relevant actors working together towards the same goal. Ending homelessness requires a **systemic change**. If temporary accommodation is the main option for homeless people it is not leading to ending homelessness.
- Homelessness has been seen as a national social problem of **utmost priority**. We regard housing as a basic **human right**, where it is the government's duty to act.

- Currently, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health funds seven projects that are developing multidisciplinary low threshold **social and health services** for homeless people. One example are the moving/field services in multidisciplinary teams. The project is also developing guidance for housing. Target group are homeless people in most difficult situations.

Social protection

- As a small nation we have a very strong conviction that we have to take care of the most vulnerable individuals in our society.
- Digitalization and future of work are key drivers that shape our societies in future. From the perspective of social protection, digitalization and future of work will provide us with many **opportunities** as well as pose some new **challenges**. We believe that bringing the principles of **comprehensive social policy** and **universal social protection** into reality can help us to seize these new opportunities and provide us with many solutions to challenges we face.
- **Reducing income inequality** is high on Finland's economic agenda.

Digital inclusion

- Finland ranks consistently near the top in **digitalization and innovativeness** of its economy and society. Innovation – both technological and social – has helped make Finland into what it is today: a prosperous and open society, with **social justice and equality for all**.
- Digital solutions should build on trust and be **inclusive**. It is important to ensure data security, data privacy and high ethics. By putting people at the centre, we can improve accessibility and quality of services and promote well-being. These solutions may also bring about economic efficacy/efficiency and tools to act against climate change.
- We should not leave anyone behind in the new world of digital opportunities. Unfortunately, the **digital divide** is still very much there, and we need to persist in our efforts to overcome it. We must expand access to digital infrastructure for people in vulnerable situations. We must support digital skills and soft skills to advance digital inclusion. We must strengthen institutions and support policies that are more inclusive. We must support the development of digital public goods together with the beneficiaries; and we must support key international policy processes on **human rights and/or ethics** in technological development.
- Our vision is to bring **more women into technology as agents of change** – as entrepreneurs, developers and investors – to make it more gender responsive and free of structural inequality and biases. A more equal, diverse and inclusive tech is a more equitable one, for all. This vision requires a commitment to promote not only girls' STEM education at all levels but also concrete policies **to combat gendered stereotypes** in the professions.
- Based on our own experience and our values, we have also made a long-term commitment to **digital cooperation and innovation at the global level**. We see them as indispensable for **sustainable development**. They can and must serve human agency, **human rights** and the **rules-based international system**.

Lopuksi

- The 2030 Agenda remains a shared vision to end poverty and promote shared wellbeing and decent work for all, while respecting the planetary boundaries.
- In the light of Covid-19, it is very timely to reintroduce proposals, such as the **Global Social Protection Fund**, in order to meet the global challenges in the field of social protection.

- We have a duty to ourselves and to future generations. We must ensure that **social dimension** is fully integrated in the implementation of Agenda 2030 at all levels.

3. Olivier de Schutter

Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights:

Notes taken of his contribution.

This is a unique moment, an opportunity not to be missed. SDGs call for international solidarity and enhanced development cooperation in the field of social protection. Predictable means of financing along the lines of recommendation 202 of 2012 and defined nationally are the key principles of basis of the 2011 Bachelet report on social protection floors. OECD can afford it: the financing gap for low-income countries, at about 78 billion USD post-Covid, is approximately half of total official development assistance provided in 2019 by OECD countries. There is an urgent need with Covid to build social resilience to help countries deal with the crisis and future shocks. The G-20 should include this on its agenda.

There are a few misunderstandings about the Fund:

1. The aim of the GFSP is not that rich countries provide support in poorer countries as a permanent device, or that taxpayers from rich countries contribute infinitely to social protection in low-income countries. The Fund should provide a temporary support, and bridge to act as an incentive and a mobilizing mechanism to invest in social protection systems that are rights based requiring predictability in financing. It is a stimulus to invest in social development, legal entitlements (202) and in human capital.
2. The fund offers a strong incentive for rich countries to remove obstacles to deal with tax avoidance and tax evasion. Global Alliance for Tax suggests that \$245 billion is lost as a result of corporate tax abuse and avoidance, including by base erosion and profit shifting; accelerated the formalization of informal work is also needed. These reforms can be helped by capacity building and increased international cooperation.
3. The fund does not mean that beneficiary low income countries are given a blank check. The provision of support would go hand in hand with the setting up of national dialogues involving social partners and civil society for the identification of gaps and the design of social protection floors. ILO has been pioneering such assessment based dialogues involving all to build strong legitimate national ownership in identifying gaps and solutions for social protection.

Session 2

1. Rob Robinson Dignity and Rights IGH

Rob was formerly homeless in Miami and in NYC. Shelters are not the answer - there are more than 550 shelters in NYC and homelessness still is not ended. More than 65,000 people are in shelters in NYC and probably that many are living on the street. Most do not have access to internet or digital technology. The digital divide makes it difficult for people to organize around homelessness, even with efforts like the Obama administration's to get cellphones to people who are homeless. There is no way to report people living in informal shelters. Rob works to organize students and community based NGOs to map and show us gaps and to develop an app to report issues. This event will be helpful to make the case for closing the digital gap because communication is a human right.

2. Samuel Obara APSP

1. Intersectionality issues around gender, disability and age in social protection in Africa , with examples from selected countries – The commonwealth project in Kenya, the grassroots pilots in Zim, Uganda and Zambia. The Pilot projects was instrumental in influencing how to improve

inclusivity among low income and vulnerable groups especially issues around programme design and feedback mechanisms

2. Triple burden (Gender , Disability and Age)
3. Lack of registration documents (Access to a mobile phone connection is being linked to having identification documents, people on the street and several in the informal settlements and rural areas may not be having these documents), Immigrant pops most of the time not prioritized
4. Access to affordable energy (Green energy) for digital coverage and connectivity
5. Exclusions and invisibility in data , policies and programme design
6. Disconnect between policy and practice- very good laws that are never implemented (good example Kenya)
7. CoVID-19, Social protection and SDGS, '*many voicing falling off the table*', evidence of lack of proper inclusive and sustainable shock responsive measures for vulnerable pops especially in Sub Saharan Africa

3. Roshni GCAP India

Background and impact of COVID-19

- In India, urban environment is a complex playground where the forces of caste, class and gender intersect in the face of the declining welfare role of the state and diminishing spaces for participatory democracy. Migration is a constant, gentrification, inequality and discrimination are widespread.
- This context has two implications for the urban poor
 - **Invisibility** - lack of documents, entitlements, social protection. Give examples during COVID.
 - Urban poor are extremely essential for the city - but not valuable. Give example.

Social protection status and civil society response

- **Low investment by State:** Our government not putting in money into SP. 2021 budget seen reductions in all social policy areas.
- **Poor implementation by State:** Civil society knows that in India even today basic things like minimum wage, pensions, minimum support price for crops are all only on paper, despite what the State claims. To push for accountability, we need independent assessments and analyses led by CS.
- **Role of evidence in pushing for accountability by CS:** Data is necessary, and bottom-up data processes are important.
 - For instance: one exploration is a Social Protection Score - still early days - but map all existing benefits, and then gives a targetted area of work for all levels of the government.
 - Risks of data for the sake of profiling – very high in current Indian context. CS has to play a role in mitigating these risks while ensuring adequate data for SP.
- **Support organising by CS:** not just unions but diverse forms of collectives, since urban poor and homeless are also heterogenous. Collectives *not* dashboards and platforms.

Support from international community

- How can **CS be the alternative voice** to the government at the global level. Further not just a voice, but find leverage through international community to **influence the decision making at the domestic level**.
 - For instance last year India CS brought out alternative VNR – worked well for an authentic ground-connected voice.
 - But we have to see what pressure mechanisms we can create to convert voice into discernable concrete shifts/change?
- Role of global coalitions like the Global Fund- **Where are resources needed?**
 - For advocating for better policy shifts at national level

- For improving implementation structures, since even when SP programmes exist, huge bureaucratic hurdles, lack of human resources, functionaries for the last mile.
- Technology as an enabler not as a driver. Will speak more about this now:

Technology role

- **When to use technology:** Technology is an enabler, cannot drive the process. Has to come downstream. Where it exists as a substitute for political will, the process caves in. Our experience shows this. **What moment in time the tech comes** is paramount.
- **Where to use technology:** our experience says at the last mile to improve access and outreach. But typically we see governments use technology as a centralising mechanism - which is ironical - but true.
 - Example: Digital health ID, 360 surveillance. This impacts the urban poor.
 - We do need visibilisation, but to ensure social protection, not for surveillance. And currently technology claims to do the former, but ends up doing the latter.

Conclusion

- Governments should have robust SP mechanism for different kinds of workers, different kinds of vulnerable groups, heterogenous and longitudinal, both.
- Keep SP measures evolving - post COVID is different
- CS role as an active and responsive partner in ensuring SP for LNOB
- Data for mapping SP needs and monitoring has to have a people-owned nature.
- Technology should be to see diversity in needs of SP of UP and also come downstream as an enabler.

4. Sulistri Afrileston - All Indonesian Trade Union Confederation

The Covid 19 pandemic has a broad impact on people's lives, especially workers, both formal and informal. Many people lost their jobs, not enough income, most of them do not cover by social security and no strong social protection at the countries level. The tourism sector, including hotels, guides, travel agents, is one of the sector worst affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Imagine, the employe of hotel who has 3 children who work in a hotel must lose a job. How do they get sick? because they no longer pay social security contributions so that they can no longer enjoy social security benefits, How do they pay rent of their house? How do they have to survive? what about the education of their children? because the state does not yet have a strong and adequate social protection, and there are still many more questions.

Indonesia Minister of State-Owned Enterprises recorded 2,56 million people lost their jobs and more than 1,8 million people experienced a decrease in income. The impact of covid 19, also goes to the trade union, KSBSI lost more than 7 thousands members.

The COVID-19 pandemic has served as a **wake-up call**, alerting the International community to the **crucial importance** of social protection. COVID-19 has also shown absence of **universal and comprehensive** social protection systems.

Therefore the countries must work together to minimize the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic toward achieving the SDGs goals and discuss efforts for recovery. The countries must take steps to reduce the impact of Covid 19 pandemic quickly. As the whole world undergoes an economic recession, governments should fund economic stimulus packages that are anchored on promoting decent work. Micro, small and medium enterprises that provide jobs for many of the working poor should be

subsidized to sustain business operation and retain employment of their workers, while workers should receive income guarantees.

Workplaces should implement COVID-19 prevention and control measures, with working Safety Committees that are composed of management and union representatives, that work together to address the pandemic.

Directly or indirectly, Covid 19 has influenced the achievement of SDGs, therefore all stakeholders (academia, the media, business groups, non-governmental organizations, trade union and civil society) must sit together with the government at the international, regional and national level to discuss what steps should be taken so that the SDGs 2030 goals are achieved and no one left behind. The government cannot solve this problem alone. **So, social dialogue and other forms of inclusive dialogue between multi stakeholders and the government as a means of implementing SDGs is one of the keys to success in reducing the impact of covid 19 pandemic and achieving the SDGs goals.**

I believe that strong social protection will be reducing the impact of covid 19 pandemic, encourage the achievement of SDGs goals and ensure an inclusive and sustainable recovery for all. For that UN and agencies must help poor countries to strengthen social protection at the country level, through facilitate the creation of Global Fund for Social Protection.

The creation of Global Fund for Social Protection should involved and fully engage 3 group of actors : the government, economic actors and representative demand relevant civil society. It's not only a general rule. It's the best guarantee to really reach and cover all vulnerable groups in society.

We don't want a top down fund, where all decisions are made at the international level. Since a fund should strengthen national systems, national organisations have to be effectively involved, in priority setting, in management and in monitoring. Therefore it is important to include trade unions and civil society organizations at the national level and also the level of international architecture.

Session 3:

Nicola Wiebe GCSPF

Thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to this discussion around ACTION FOR CHANGE on behalf of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors - a global network of civil society organizations, trade unions and think tanks committed to the realisation of ILO-Recommendation 202 on social protection floors.

Raising social protection floors means to guarantee minimum income security over the life course and access to essential health care, **building roofs** means providing access to a home that offers safety, autonomy and opportunity.

In principle, national Governments bear the overall responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil these very basic human rights.

At the same time there are important tasks for Civil Society and for the International Community of Nations. The social catastrophe caused by the pandemic makes accelerated joint action ever more urgent in view of the commitments to end poverty by 2030.

We just heard from social protection experts from different countries about the enormous challenges around building truly inclusive social protection floors, especially if we are serious about reaching those left furthest behind. Even universal categorical programmes like non-contributory social pensions or universal child benefits often need various years and active engagement to extend coverage to those who suffer from multiple exclusion or intersecting discrimination as for example people enduring homelessness.

We have also heard about the arduous ongoing work. Civil society organizations raise awareness for apparently invisible, extremely vulnerable groups, as explained by Roshini. They provide governments with insights regarding how in the real world to overcome access hurdles, as Samuel exposed. They reconnect most vulnerable groups via inclusive digital technology to social services and protection, as presented by Rob. They keep guard for data protection of the most vulnerable. They are important actors of the long-term effort to re-integrate the excluded into social cohesion and build solidarity-based social protection systems as Sulistri said.

The Corona crisis experience points again at the importance of long-term system-building based on a broad social dialogue and coordination of all involved actors. Despite the impressive number and scale of social protection responses, most programs have failed to protect all people in need. Especially those formerly not integrated into the social protection system as informal sector workers, undocumented migrants, and homeless people. In other cases people without access to digital technology were not able to make their claims or to receive transfers. And in many cases ad-hoc programmes ended while the crisis was ongoing.

Without rights-based social protection floors, social protection systems cannot protect the individual adequately nor use their potential to mitigate the social and economic impact on societies as a whole. Without solid floors the vision of adaptive social protection systems, able to react to this and future crises adequately, will not materialize. That is why target 1.3 of SDG goal 1 on poverty is to implement social protection floors in all countries.

Reliable system building needs long term joint engagement and funding. Recognizing that financing social protection is primarily the responsibility of national governments, it is still evident that in some low-income countries international support is required until international tax justice improves and domestic fiscal capacity increases. While the financing gap for low-income countries according to ILO estimates represents 15.9% of their GDP, related to the Global GDP it is only 0.25%.

Astonishingly, international funding for social protection is still extremely low, despite the vast scientific evidence on the effectiveness of investing in social protection to tackle extreme poverty.

The proposal to pool funds and expertise globally for high priority issues is far from new. Many times, it has been the instrument of choice to engage for common goals and coordinated progress in various specific sectors, as for example in Health, HIV, Education, and Climate as well as related to the cross-sectoral Agenda 2030 (Joint SDG Fund).

A Global Fund for Social Protection should be endowed with financial and technical resources according to the capacities and disbursed according to social needs and requirements of countries. Decisions regarding design and implementation have to be taken by the government of the recipient country, based on ongoing national dialogues and cooperation with social partners and civil society.

The United Nations and its specialised agencies are needed to play the leading role in setting up and governing a Global Fund for Social Protection now. We in civil society are ready to support these efforts with our work on national and international level.

2. Shahra Razawi ILO

- ▶ Just as the COVID-19 crisis starkly revealed severe gaps in coverage, comprehensiveness and adequacy of social protection, it has also underscored the urgency of investing more effectively in social protection systems, including floors, so they can guarantee at least a basic level of income security and access to health care for all. To create the preconditions for an inclusive recovery and sustained socioeconomic development, countries need to make the shift from ad hoc, temporary schemes and porous “safety nets”, to **building solid social protection systems, including floors**.
- ▶ Taking this leap forward demands a range of capacities, not least **financial**. Already taking into account the impact of COVID-19, low-income countries would need to invest an **additional US\$77.9 billion or 15.9 per cent of their GDP** to close the annual financing gap in achieving SDGs 1.3 and 3.8 on universal social protection and universal health coverage in 2020 (Durán Valverde et al. 2020).
- ▶ Current expenditure levels on social protection are clearly insufficient to close the persistent coverage gaps that leave more than half of the global population without any access to social protection, despite large – yet unequal – resource mobilization during COVID-19 crisis. The limited fiscal space of developing countries has manifested itself in what the ILO calls the ‘stimulus gap’, whereby lower-middle income countries mustered only a tiny fraction of the fiscal stimulus measures put in place in high-income countries, incommensurate with the scale of labour market disruptions they have experienced. This is even more concerning as the cumulative effects of fiscal policy are expected to be even larger in the longer-run (ILO 2020 – World of Work Monitor, 6th edition).

I would like to raise five points in this regard.

- ▶ First, developing countries do NOT have the luxury of being able to mount deficit spending on the scale that developed countries have been doing. It is thus disheartening that even those developing countries that do not have balance of payments constraints or high debt issues are not spending what they should to address the crisis **because they fear the pressure of credit rating agencies and financial markets**. In other words, for both ideological and structural reasons, many developing countries are not doing what is necessary to counter the vicious spiral of economic contraction unleashed by the crisis (which even the IMF has been advising countries to do).
- ▶ Second, all developing countries can put more effort into mobilizing additional resources through taxation, including **wealth and inheritance taxes** – not only to be able to invest in social protection and public services, but also to address the rising tide of inequality which has continued unabated during this pandemic (with the stunning rise in the wealth of billionaires as reported by Bloomberg).
- ▶ Third, while domestic resource mobilisation must remain the cornerstone of national social protection systems, for developing countries **international coordination is critical**, especially in the current context of falling commodity prices, disruptions in export revenues and dwindling remittances. Hence, for countries that are saddled with huge external debts, it is critical to find workable solutions for internationally agreed debt restructuring so they are not forced to service their debt, when they could be investing their limited resources in public health and income support measures that are so desperately needed to prevent human suffering and a deepening economic recession. There is also a dire need for greater international cooperation on tax matters, not only with regard to tax havens, but also when it

comes to taxing multinational corporations (which currently manage to avoid taxation through profit shifting) by having, for example, a unitary taxation system whereby each country taxes their global profits based on their share of sales and employment.

Likewise, turning the tide of illicit financial flows requires global cooperation, without which domestic resource mobilization will prove very difficult. International cooperation can also take the form of creating a Global Fund with the explicit purpose of supporting developing countries in building their national social protection floors—an idea that was first floated in 2012 (by 2 international human rights mandate holders) and has gained renewed traction and urgency over the past year.

- ▶ Fourth, and following from the point just made, civil society organisations make a critical contribution in this respect. I would like to highlight in particular the role of the more than 100 organisations that form the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, which have had a significant impact in advocating for universal social protection. From the very beginning, the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors has been a strong supporter for the UN Social Protection Floor Initiative, and the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation. And today they are advocating strongly for the Global Fund for Social Protection. The Global Coalition not only plays an important role in knowledge development and advocacy, they are also an important partner in implementation, for instance in the EC-INTPA (international partnerships) funded project on Public Finance and Social Protection, where they are working together with the ILO and UNICEF.
- ▶ Finally, at the national level, an inclusive national dialogue is essential for forging a broad consensus to inform the formulation, implementation, financing and monitoring of social protection policies. Together with workers' and employers' organisations, civil society actors can give voice to those who would otherwise not be heard, and push for greater accountability on the part of decision-makers and greater transparency of policy processes.
- ▶ To conclude, in a highly globalized world the issue of financing social protection cannot be left to national governments alone; solidarity, cooperation and coordination at the global level are indispensable to find a workable solution. Both civil society organizations and UN organisations have a critical role to play at this regard – with civil society providing the vision, passion and specific solutions to make the enjoyment of human rights a reality for everyone; and UN agencies providing the policy analysis and technical options for its implementation.

Paul Ladd UNRISD - Concluding Comments

Covid-19

Covid-19 will roll back progress on wellbeing and human rights. Not social development but rather social regression (Meryame Kitir). Greater impacts on women. Greater impacts on other groups depending on age, disability, race, ethnicity. The numbers affected are huge – but behind each number is a person.

Social protection

Covid-19 has placed social protection right back at the centre of the debate. Measures have been ramped up in many countries, especially in HICs and MICs, and even in countries with right-wing / conservative governments. Rolled out more effectively in countries with already comprehensive / universal systems – otherwise harder to get new measures up and running. While Covid-19 is undoubtedly a tragedy, it has presented a political opportunity to get traction on a system that we know works. We have to use the opportunity now and strike while the iron is hot. Covid-19 will not be the last crisis / shock we face.

Global Fund for SP

Very helpful for Olivier to address some of the misconceptions and misunderstandings of the proposed fund. Not least because previous 'vertical funds' have a mixed reputation, especially when they have been top-down and instilled 'donorship' rather than ownership. When they have not been built from the bottom-up, with the participation of local groups and civil society (Sulistri). When they have had non-inclusive governance and imposed conditionality. Also, important to point out that ultimately countries themselves will have to finance their own social protection systems (Nicole). That said, a global fund could be an important bridge for countries unable to do that now. We know that social protection is an effective investment. As ODA is likely to go down because of domestic priorities in donor countries, it's also important to look broadly at financing – including tax evasion and avoidance, debt relief etc

Beyond financing

Financing is a constraint, but we heard that political will is also a barrier (Roshni). We need to keep on gathering the research and evidence that makes the case. Need for continued advocacy in all fora.

Homelessness

Some countries have introduced new measures to tackle homelessness during the crisis, at least in the provision of temporary shelter. But these may be rolled back as soon as it seems we are out of the crisis. Points to the need for social protection systems to be universal, comprehensive, integrated and addressed across sectors and issues holistically. Need to be adaptive and accompany people throughout their lives. Needs to be there and operative when people don't need it, as well as when they do. People dip in a out of needing support.

Digital technologies

We heard from Samuel that there are huge opportunities for new digital technologies to improve social protection systems. Can get support to people more quickly and efficiently, and has the potential to reduce costs, mismanagement and corruption. At the same time the benefits of new technologies have to be balanced with the risks around privacy and misuse of data by public and private bodies.