



**International
Labour
Organization**



**Global
Call to Action
Against Poverty**

People Rising to End Inequalities

Financing for development in the era of COVID-19 and beyond
**Cluster 2: socio-economic response: social protection, gender,
youth, health, education, and human rights**

Consultation with NGOs and Civil Society organization

Date: 11 March 2021, Time: 8:00-10:15am

REPORT

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Concept note, and tentative programme
[can be accessed here](#)

Plenary: Key points of discussion:

Opening session

Opening remarks: Event Moderator, Ms. Anita Thomas, Chair, NGO Committee on Financing for Development

- Overview of Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond Initiative (FfDI) and next steps:
Mr. Alberto Padova, Chief, Strategic Engagement and Policy Integration Branch, UN FSDO
- Overview of cluster 2 expectations and ensuring the menu of options are implementation ready.
Ms. Beate Andrees, Special Representative and Director, ILO Office for the United Nations

- Over the last nine months, while there has been progress in some areas through debt standstill and debt relief through the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), extended to June 2021, and the Common Framework for Debt Treatment, the solutions have not measured up to the scale of the crisis.
- While most G20 Members are calling for an allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDR) of \$500 billion, civil society has called for a \$3 trillion allocation.
- Additional challenges are on the rise including vaccine nationalism becoming widespread inhibiting the ability of countries to serve their population, increasing gap between the rich and the poor countries in terms of fiscal responses and drop in Official Development Assistance (ODA) as well as the 'steroid effect' of emergency responses.
- Good data and measurement (fiscal stimulus gap and social protection gap), global standards and norms, alignment of national-level implementation and spending with planning, an enabling environment for private sector engagement, and strong stakeholder participation, are key to addressing the challenges ahead.
- The pandemic has adversely impacted all sectors of the economy, but nowhere is the hurt as marked as in the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector. The survival of MSMEs will depend heavily on how well the issue of systemic resilience of MSMEs is dealt with as well as initiation of major regulatory reforms, making shifts in business operation models, providing access to reliable and affordable finance and credit, and realizing digital transformation to withstand and survive future shocks.

- Macro level finance policies with a human-centered approach are crucial for making a meaningful and sustainable impact to address the already existing inequities in access to health, education, social protection, and employment. The crisis provides significant opportunities to redesign economies, ensure a safe and decent work environment, fight climate change and environmental degradation, and transition from fossil fuels to investments in decarbonised, sustainable, and green economies and jobs.
- To build on the progress achieved and address some of the shortcomings in the global response to this crisis, a roadmap for the Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond Initiative (FfDI) (launched in May 2020) has been developed in 2021. The various streams of work will be supported by various UN entities in six clusters, as follows:
 - Sustainability and climate action, led by UNDP.
 - Socio-economic response: social protection, gender, youth, health, education, and human rights, led by ILO.
 - Finance and technology, led by UNCTAD.
 - Liquidity and debt vulnerability, led by DESA.
 - Illicit financial flows, led by the Regional Economic Commissions.
 - Addressing special country needs, led by DESA.
- The Clusters will bring the menu of options for consideration at the country level through the UN country teams, in collaboration with partners on the ground, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to translate the options into concrete policy outcomes.
- A series of high-level events have been planned for 2021 with the intent to encourage the Member States to take concrete actions - a meeting of Heads of State and Government on the International Debt Architecture and Global Liquidity, a Global Roundtable on extractive industries in late April/May, and a High-Level Event on debt, liquidity, and illicit financial flows in June to put pressure ahead of the G7 Summit to be held between 11-13 June.

Interactive thematic panel discussion

- Mr. Vernor Muñoz, Head of Policy, Advocacy & Campaigns, Global Campaign for Education
- Dr. Roopa Dhatt, Executive Director and Founder, Women in Global Health
- Ms. Ana Zeballos, Global Coordinator, Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors
- Mr. David Boys, David Boys, Deputy General Secretary, Public Services International

Moderator: Mr. Paul Divakar Namala, Co-Chair, Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP)

Universal access to Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning:

- During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, **an estimated 1.5 billion learners had their education stopped or interrupted**. Education systems continue to face a devastating crisis, the challenges around public financing and the ever-increasing pressure on resources for public services, are resulting in less prioritisation of education. While some learners have returned to school, the COVID-19 pandemic deepened the digital exclusion of many, especially vulnerable communities, including children with disabilities.
- While international law states that governments should take steps to the maximum of their available resources to realise the right to education, the international political frameworks are more precise around their obligations on education financing. For instance, the Incheon Declaration aligned to the Sustainable Development Agenda states that all countries should allocate at least 4 – 6% of gross domestic product (GDP) and at least 15 – 20% of total public expenditure to education. These instruments also state that the ODA by rich countries should achieve the target of 0.7% of the gross national product for developing countries. Despite these clear obligations, according to UNESCO, the total annual education **financing gap** is around \$39 billion.
- Crisis in education financing will continue to escalate until and unless illicit financial flows and the aggressive tax avoidance by the richest companies that have left public budgets stripped of resources to fund quality public education are addressed.

Gender and health

- Investment in the safe, decent, and formal sector work for women in the health and care sector and ending women's unpaid and underpaid work will have a triple gender dividend:
 - First, a health dividend: women currently outside formal health systems would be enabled to use their expertise to fill the large number of vacant jobs in health and care. 18 million additional health worker jobs are needed in low and middle-income countries alone to achieve Universal Health Coverage.
 - Second, a gender dividend: moving unpaid and underpaid work into formal sector jobs would increase women's incomes, autonomy, and dignity and have a multiplier impact on family health, nutrition, and broader well-being.
 - Third, an economic dividend: the creation and filling of new jobs in health and care would drive economic growth.

Social Protection

- [Social Panorama of Latin America \(cepal.org\)](https://cepal.org) reported that the increase in poverty and extreme poverty levels would be even greater in the absence of the measures implemented by governments to transfer emergency income to households. Governments in the region implemented 263 emergency social protection measures in 2020, reaching 49.4% of the population, which is approximately 84 million households or 326 million people. Without these measures, the incidence of extreme poverty would have surged to 15.8% and that of poverty, to 37.2% of the population.
- A study by Oxfam International on the emergency responses between April and September 2020 in 126 low- and middle-income countries found that:
 - In 81% of the countries, emergency responses cover less than half their population.
 - In 29% of the countries, fewer than one in 10 people have been protected as workers in the informal sector.
 - Benefits provided to families are short-lived and too low to pay even for basic needs.
 - In lower-middle-income countries, average investment has been just 0.46% of GDP, with only two of these countries reaching 2% (“Shelter from the storm”, Oxfam).
 - Most programmes recently set up are not long-term.
 - 2.7 billion people still have absolutely no access to social protection.
 - The financing gap for low-income countries is about 78 billion USD, about half of the total ODA provided in 2019 by OECD countries.
- The COVID-19 crisis urges strengthened international solidarity, global cooperation, and pooled funding to ensure investment in and development of inexistent or underdeveloped social protection systems in low-income countries, underpinned by strengthened tax capacity and international regulation to reduce tax evasion and avoidance.
- Ensuring fiscal policy space for governments to implement their own social protection policies is fundamental to addressing the challenges ahead. In this context, it is imperative to:
 - Deal with global tax systems that will ensure that corporations and the richest contribute.
 - Ensure developing countries have access to viable debt workout mechanisms beyond the current G20, OECD, and IMF proposals.
 - Monitor and limit privatisation as imposed by international financial institutions (IFIs) and bilateral donors.

- Implement a transparent, accountable, and participatory democratic system of global economic and financial governance with human rights framework and protection of our planet at its core.
- To meet the above objectives, governments need a capable workforce with the tools and training to serve the public.

Breakout sessions: Key points of discussion

Session 1: Universal Social Protection

- Facilitators: Sr. Winifred Doherty, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd & Ms. Leslie Wright, Zonta
- Resource Person: Ms. Shahra Razavi, Director, ILO Social Protection Department

Session 2: Decent and well-remunerated work

- Facilitators: Mr. Daniel Perrel, Baha'i International Community
- Resource Person: Mr. Sangheon Lee, Director, ILO Employment Policy Department
- Resource Person: Mr. Jim Campbell, Director, Health Workforce, WHO

Session 3: Universal Access to Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning

- Facilitators: Sr. Teresa Kotturan, Sisters of Charity Federation & Mr. Joseph Klock, New Humanity, Focolare Movement
- Resource Person: Mr. Paul Comyn, Senior Skills and Employability Specialist Employment Policy Department, ILO
- Resource Person: Mr. Herve Huot-Marchand, Chief of Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development, UNESCO
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Session 4: Capable states sustainably financed.

- Facilitators: Ms. Gemma Adaba, Social Justice in Global Development & Ms. Rosa Lizarde, Feminist Taskforce
- Resource Person: Ms. Resina Katafono, Economic Affairs Officer, Financing for Sustainable Development Office.

Session 1: Universal Social Protection

- Financing has to serve the real economy- decent jobs and the right to social protection when we need it, and when we face risks whether it is individual risks or systemic risks.
- Despite progress, the human right to social security is not yet a reality for the majority of the world. Only 46.9% of the global population are effectively covered by at least one social protection benefit, while the remaining 53.1%– as many as 4.14 billion people –

are left unprotected. These coverage gaps are associated with under-investment in social protection, particularly in Africa Asia, and the Arab States.

- On a global level, countries are spending 12.9% of their GDP on social protection which excludes health care. High-income countries spend 16.5 % of GDP on social protection which is double what middle-income countries spend at 8% of their GDP, 6 times more than lower-middle-income countries, and 15 times more than low-income countries which spend 1.1% of GDP on social protection.
- COVID-19 underscored this need to make Social Protection a universal reality for everyone and has highlighted gaps in all countries including high-income countries but mostly low-income countries.
- ILO Social Protection Monitor tracks about 1600 measures that have been taken, in total, by almost every country. But these are temporary measures which do not adequately address the need and the fiscal stimulus is unevenly divided between different countries.
- These challenges have derailed progress on SDGs- especially in poverty reduction and gender equality. The pandemic, however, has demonstrated that social protection is indispensable and must play an integral role in enabling the smooth functioning of society and the need for Universal Social Protection.
- Social protection measures must be maintained with continued investment to maintain living standards and to prevent a further economic contraction. Austerity measures lead to deep scarring and cannot be an option though some countries have no choice.
- A human-centered recovery, jobs-rich, and decent work could go a long way to financing universal social protection and for it to be self-sustainable.
- The financing gap has increased since the crisis by 38%. Lower and upper-middle-income countries will need to invest \$363 billion and \$750 billion respectively for nationally defined social protection floors which are 5 to 3% of their GDPs. Low-income countries need to invest 17% of their GDP and will require help in this regard.
- Now is the time to close the coverage gap and reinvigorate so that people can trust their governments, and governments are responsive to their needs and accountable to their citizens. There is a policy window that COVID-19 has opened, and these temporary measures can be transformed into the right-based social protection systems that can be sustained.

- In addition to under-investment, there are also wrong investments in very complicated targeting measures that are not effective, keep people out, and may create tensions at the local levels opening up for corruption or misuse and not conducive to building a social contract. The momentum coming from all governments doing what they did not do before and all citizens realizing the importance of having social protection must be capitalized.
- One of the measures should be to ensure there is clarity in who is not being reached. Are there publicly available data showing who does not have access? Why can't we have

policies which are derived from the human rights framework and monitor them? The OHCHR has a good way to do this and there are tools.

- In India, National Campaign on Dalit Human rights conducted an inclusion assessment of COVID-19 relief packages and found low coverage and abysmal realization of social protection schemes. A huge proportion of Scheduled Caste (former untouchables) and Scheduled Tribe communities were not even registered under these programmes and so could not benefit from the package. They live on daily wages and could barely survive, and often are facing violence.
- The CIVICUS Monitor, a participatory platform to measure global civic space conditions, reveals that 87% of the world's population live in countries with adverse civic space conditions. As many as 25% of the world's population live in countries with completely closed civic space conditions. This stymies efforts to control high-level corruption and reach discriminated minorities. Moreover, we are increasingly seeing an upsurge in politically motivated judicial prosecution of civil society activists and the use of questionable legislation to impede the work and notably the resourcing of civil society organizations. In several countries, security legislation is being repurposed to punish activists and organizations engaged in speaking the truth to power and exposing rights violations by powerful agencies. Further, the right to peaceful assembly is being impeded in insidious ways. Civic space is essential to transparency, accountability, and participation. However civic space conditions remain extremely challenging especially for organisations engaged in supporting the rights of disadvantaged populations and exposing high-level corruption.
- Restricting civil society organisations' access to funding from international development agencies or international philanthropic institutions because they speak truths to the power, detrimentally impacts the important work they need to do to promote activities that are essential to social protection.

Session 2: Decent and well-remunerated work

- The COVID -19 pandemic has created unprecedented disruption to the labour market. Key premises in this regard are as follows:
 - Following the financial crisis of 2008 and 2009, governments made the mistake of implementing austerity measures when signs of recovery became evident. These measures were painful, and it took much longer for the labour market and for jobs and income to pick up. It has been more than 10 years since those crises and the labour market never achieved its pre-crisis level thresholds.
 - Before the pandemic, the labour market was already weak wherein decent jobs were unevenly distributed and inequality in opportunities, income, and pay were growing.
 - The labour market disruption during the pandemic is four times that of the global financial crisis leading to greater disparities between developed and developing countries and income losses. Compensation measures are largely absent in developing countries.

- A significant policy shift at the global and national level in fiscal policy, monetary policy, public financing, and investment strategies, clear focus on jobs and social protection as well as political momentum, is needed if full and productive employment is to be achieved; Inclusive job recovery with clear strategies targeting women, youth, and informal workers is needed.
- Health and education sectors are infamous for low paid and long working hours. Investment in health and care sectors, social protection, digital economy, green economy, and decent jobs are needed.
- Social dialogue allowing for interaction with policymakers including all sectors especially on financial matters is important for a new social contract as called for by the UN Secretary-General.
- Civil society organizations' efforts to hold governments accountable are crucial to advance the decent work agenda.
- Nobel Prize Economists over the last 20 years, including Joseph Stiglitz and Christopher Pissarides, have won the prize for demonstrating that investing in health and care was an investment.
- A fundamental policy shift to advance investment in health, education, and social protection without commodification is necessary. In addition, there is a need to pay closer attention to green jobs, just transition and skills training.
- From a Keynesian perspective, we need to reaffirm that investment in health, labour, and social protection is an investment that generates inclusive economic growth that provides many dividends. There is already ample evidence that investments in social care in OECD countries will give a greater economic return than investing in physical infrastructure, gives more jobs for women, and gives better, and more decent work.
- The two elements to be considered to create more jobs are, taking informal or poorly paid or non-unionized jobs and giving them decent work, and then expanding the number of jobs in these sectors in response to the population needs and demands. For every job in the social care sector, 2-3 indirect jobs are generated from it, creating a ripple impact into rural economies, urban centers, and other areas.
- Many economists have become wedded to the philosophy that the public is poor and is not performing and the private is good and will generate a dividend. But the evidence shows that the opposite is the case and that the public sector investment into social protection with strong stewardship and governance can deliver all the additional dividends.
- More social dialogues with workers and employers have led to more effective solutions to address the fallout from the pandemic. Moving forward through social dialogue is critical. E.g., the Case of Argentina where the government has helped to recognize COVID 19 as an occupational disease and to provide medium-term and short-term fiscal responses to workers and their populations.
- "WHO's process of social dialogue, with ILO in certain countries, uses the 4 Ds model: Data -> Dialogue -> Decision -> Dollar"
 1. Data and evidence on the labour market in health and care.

2. Social dialogue with all relevant stakeholders (including unions, associations, communities) and government representatives from health, education, gender, finance, etc.
 3. Evidence-informed policy decisions.
 4. Costed, with accompanying Return on Investment calculations, and presented in a format for Treasury, Cabinet, and International Financing Institutions
- There are fewer problems with broader macroeconomic policies in the Global South. The countries might have low GDP but even within the amounts being put forward, there are layers of discrimination that are not being sufficiently addressed. E.g., in South Asian countries namely, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, particular communities face discrimination on the basis of work and descent (DWD) (e.g., Dalits). They do work that is menial, manual, and polluted - mostly undocumented, intergenerational and are born into a caste; women and other minorities are further pushed to destitution level. Similar communities exist in other parts of the world including in Western Africa and Europe (e.g., Roma, Gypsy). They are not included in social protection programmes even where the countries have initiated targeted programmes. There is a tendency where many trade unions have not sufficiently captured this particular aspect. There is no international architecture that takes their concerns into account.
 - Care is work, it is not a burden or an expense and should not be minimized but considered as an investment in women and children with potentially high returns. The COVID-19 crisis has spotlighted what really matters to people, in particular the critical importance of care work which is done mostly by women. Many women were forced out of the labour market during the crisis. Feminist economists have pointed out for many years that inequitable unpaid care work is the root cause of gender inequalities and discrimination. This crisis has highlighted the challenges that mothers in particular face in trying to juggle work with care responsibilities and homeschooling.
 - On the one hand, the care economy represents women's unpaid but deserved work in the care sector writ large. But on the other, it is about health and care which is a multi-trillion-dollar industry. The distinction between the two must be kept in mind.
 - There is a clear recognition of the importance of the care work and the importance of the care as the public responsibility. For example, when it comes to financing decisions if policymakers are given the choice to make investments in care or infrastructure-bridges, the choice is almost always to invest in bridges. What can be done to address the political policy inertia to focus on care?
 - Many good reports are coming out of the UN "high-level "meetings, but they are not translating to commitments and actions. This makes it clear that we as civil society have to begin at home, get engaged, develop coalitions of the willing, move into the areas of concern and where needed, take to the streets.
 - Cities, as employers, are not represented in the ILO. Pressure needs to be put at the city level as people go to the city level for services.
 - Migrants and migrant workers are not offered well or even de-remunerated work. There is a clear need to facilitate safe, orderly, and regular migration (SDG 10), to

support refugees looking for jobs (SDG 8.7), to protect the rights of migrant women workers (SDG 8.8), and to address the issue of migrant remittances and costly transfer costs.

- A specific example for policy change and collaboration is an NGO-led, but Trade Union partnered movement for migrant workers to reclaim wages that they have earned but have not been paid. There are legally enforceable obligations on the part of their employers to pay them for their hard work. Yet, during the COVID-19 crisis, millions were not paid the money they were promised and the money that they worked for.
- Specific examples of NGO driven collaborations with governments to advance post-COVID recovery:
 - Trade Unions in Argentina provided the government with a programme that aims to create 4 million jobs decentralizing the country and integrating villages and cities as well as building a resilient economy in agriculture.

Session 3: Universal Access to Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning

- Education is a human right, a global public good and people should have access to education for lifelong learning. It is what sets us free; the role of the state is fundamental; cannot be left to the private sector or only to the needs of employers. Early learning is fundamental since it enables further learning. Achieving learning for all, second chance, and non-formal learning opportunities are essential. Extending opportunities to older persons, access, and usage of technology so they can access services but also find other opportunities of growth and enrichment.
- School meals in the United States have been a great support for children. The extra burden COVID-19 has placed on families and children must be given due importance.
- The reality is that in many countries multiple conditions are preventing children from accessing education. In addition to demanding budgets and investing in teachers, we should be able to request countries to make a list of vulnerable communities in their respective countries and develop disaggregated data so that tracking can be done to promote better equity and access.
- There is a lot to be done concerning resilience and recovery. A more flexible and responsive data analysis system for the labour market would be important to address current and future challenges.
- When it comes to secondary education, there is quite a bit of analysis that we are getting closer to reaching peak ODA for education.
- Within the secondary education system, there needs to be more done to ensure more effective resource utilization and how resources are spent, allocated, and how they are linked to achieving quality and completion outcomes that are set for many sectors. The shift to performance-based funding is very important in post-compulsory education and training.
- There are some particular funding options such as social impact bonds that could apply to general and vocational education and training.

- Access continues to be a key challenge – physical and virtual infrastructure is a challenge.
- Vocation education and training are typically under-resourced and have more difficulty attracting teachers and trainers.
- Government agencies have proven themselves to be too rigid and too standardized to provide the flexibility needed for life-long learning programmes that need to rapidly respond to changing labour demands.
- We need to recognize that skill shortages are easy to proclaim but difficult to assess, as in many cases, there is limited data. The private sector has significantly reduced its support for work-based learning. There are many issues at play concerning skill mismatches such as low wages, working conditions, etc.
- Many countries are experiencing significant challenges and the issue of unemployment and underemployment are not going to be easily reversed.
- We are not looking enough at the quality of education. The World Bank in coordination with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics initiated a concept called Learning Poverty and developed an accompanying measure. The measure reveals that 53% of children from low-income and middle-income countries are experiencing learning poverty. In some of the poorer countries, this learning poverty is 80%.
- Education must be portable and transferable across borders especially for health-related professionals. The transportability of education credentials is especially needed in situations of massive, forced migrations where health professionals are crossing borders, but because they are migrants, are unable to make use of their educational credentials. They must be allowed to exercise their credentials.
- Young people who get trained get no security for their jobs. In evaluating the credential for the past year for potential student applicants for training, it must be done with an open mind, as many students, especially girls, are impacted adversely.
- It is important to implement provisions to allow women to stay at work (prevention from sexual and other harassment in the workforce).
- It is important to look at inequities outside the education system such as a barrier to digital finance on account of inability to sign a contract, and lack of ownership of property limiting the ability to provide collateral.
- Factor in the professional brain drain from the global South to the global North.

Session 4: Capable states sustainably financed

- The 2021 Inter-Agency Taskforce report shares that: "
 - Before the crisis, 55% of the world population had no access to social protection - 80% of developed countries, 19% of Middle-Income countries, and 5% of least developed countries had access to social protection.

- In their responses to address the impact of Covid-19, each country group focused on specific areas:
 - ❖ Developed countries: income and job protection.
 - ❖ Middle-Income Countries: special allowances, grants, and health
 - ❖ Least Developed Countries: food security and nutrition measures
 - ❖ Many vulnerable groups are not adequately reached, including women.
 - ❖ Financing is mainly managed by the government budget.
- Recommendations for action: Broader fiscal framework and countercyclical financing; a dedicated reserve fund to be used during a crisis (but this option may not be available to poor countries); state-contingent debt instrument; ODA; strengthening tax systems and addressing illicit financial flows.
- In many countries, the austerity measures (either imposed through conditionalities by the IMF, self-imposed by the individual country, or due to the roles of credit rating agencies) have been proven to bring more damage than benefits. This particularly is due to cuts in social spending in important sectors such as health and education. At the moment, governments are putting money in people's pockets, but the money will go back to the financial sector. As consumption will never lead to development, economic foundations need to be built to achieve the SDGs.
- The majority of the participants shared that they are not aware of the integrated national financing framework (INFF) in their respective countries. Those who were aware of this initiative commented that civil society organizations should be consulted more frequently. It was also clear from the session that the concept of INFF is not yet fully understood.
- Sound global debt restructuring mechanisms can help to limit the power of Credit Rating Agencies and the IMF, who are implementing conditionalities that are politically motivated and not based on economic fundamentals. The experience of Bolivia serves as a good example. Last month the Government of Bolivia paid back the IMF and by doing so created policy space for the implementation of pro-poor policies.
- As Environmental Social Governance initiatives are gaining traction in the private sector, leveraging this interest for developing partnerships between the private sector and the community to work to address unemployment, training, and community redevelopment could be possible and beneficial. However, accountability from the private sector in all such initiatives should be a requirement.

Additional key questions/comments/ concerns and responses/ posted in chat

- WHO has published on the Price Tag to reach universal health coverage. 60-80% of the recurrent costs are allocated to the education and employment of the health workforce. This figure is the same as OECD countries. Yet OECD and the Bretton Woods Institutions discourage Low- and Middle-Income Countries from expanding fiscal space in order to free up funds for the health sector including wages.
- International Financial Institutions have billions to lend. Social advocates (including feminist and labour economists) need to affirm and reaffirm the data which shows that investments in the health and care economy provide dividends, particularly for women and youth. Returns on these social investments are as important as investments in infrastructure. How does one convince the Treasury and Cabinet officials of the truth of these findings?
- “It is unclear how asking for a new fund would be of help. Even the Green Climate Fund, the greatest fund for the environmental emergency, is weak and not really a solution. We need to focus on re-shaping the International Architecture, not add another fund to a broken system”.

Responses

- “Why is a social protection fund important? It is difficult for those who have social protection to understand what it is not to have social protection. While there are risks of creating new bureaucracies, the fund could actually be a good thing if designed to promote and create domestic resource mobilization. Creating a fund would also help reach the millions that are uncovered. Taking concrete steps would also create the necessary political momentum. It is completely not true that funds are not useful. Without the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Education Fund, and GAVI, we would be much worse off.”
- “Special Funds can and do really help. While not saying we do not need to transform a broken system we must prioritize solidarity financing of core rights. Otherwise, millions will remain outside what is a broken, and in many places, nonexistent social protection system”.
- “A Global Fund could help coordinate international support to SP expansion (very scattered today) and put it higher on the political agenda”.
- “In social protection, it is so extremely important that all actors coordinate on a national level, but also those that are willing to support on an international level. A Global Fund could have a catalytic role to support the development of integrated universal systems”.
- “The pre-existing inequalities get exacerbated in any emergency. To realise build back better and enable resilience, social protection programmes in the

countries must prioritise the excluded DWD communities). It is these DWD communities that provide an ever-present pool of informal sector and migrant workers. It is mainly their children who are first /second generation learners and likely to discontinue education with schools remaining closed and digital means of education due to the non-affordability of technology and devices. Social protection programmes and financing for development in the COVID era have to aim at reducing pre-existing socio-economic vulnerabilities and inequalities.”

- “The map for ODA is still unclear and a fund would at this point deviates from existing allocations. It is not a solution when debt and tax abuse are the real problems”.

Responses

- “It is not a solution to debt and tax abuse, but decent and universal social protection will enable millions to be visible and stand up against these abuses”.
 - “Of course, we need international tax justice. But the human right to social protection cannot wait. We need to build social protection Floors now everywhere to protect the most vulnerable in this crisis and future crises. It is not contradictory, but complementary: tax justice and solidarity-based support”.
- “What is the utility of asking for public money from wells that are drying up based on an unjust system? We can and should call for allocation to various policies and funds, but if the system does not have enough money, how can we expect each of these valid policies to be implemented? I think the structural issue of tax havens, corporate capture, etc. is quite at the heart of all of these issues, and many more”.
 - It would be important to focus on enabling environments for civil society organisations where civic space is respected for civil society organisations that work to protect the rights of excluded communities.
 - “The COVID relief packages across countries included debt and loan interest moratorium. However, the marginalized communities borrow from local money lenders, not always the banks/microfinance institutions. FfD needs to invest in creating and strengthening livelihood options with enhanced take-home income. The labour laws have been relaxed in India (temporarily they say) and other countries which take away the rights of trade unions to speak for the workers. Such actions will create conditions for exploitation and slavery. ILO needs to take note of this”.

Recommendations

Universal Social Protection

1. Implementation of the four Essential Elements of the ILO Recommendation 202, and the establishment of a [Global Fund for Social Protection](#) as a key strategy to make this happen.
2. Global tax systems where corporations and the richest contribute are imperative to ensure governments have the fiscal policy space to implement their own social protection policies. In this regard, for corporations, country-by-country reporting (CbCR) is the first essential step.
3. Social protection has to be extended to groups that have been traditionally excluded such as vulnerable children, women in the informal economy, informal workers, and the homeless population. For all groups, social and beneficiaries' registries must be up to date – the issue of identification and access to payment is central for an effective realization of their right to social security. There is a need for a good protection system for migrants, to change the narrative, and to recognize them as contributors to society and not as disease carriers.
4. When designing social protection measures such as cash transfers, policymakers must ensure that further harm is not created by these measures: new cash transfers should not conflict with the allocation of existing social benefits. Beneficiaries should not be scrutinised (notably using social media) (importance and protection of privacy rights), stigma around specific social benefits should be avoided. E.g., in Belgium, people who are sharing apartments with their children will lose social benefits because one of the children started working, and because of the new income they would lose their social benefits. A special call around discrimination and stigma around receiving social benefits (e.g., vouchers) is needed. Ensure everyone has access to the internet to address digital exclusion.
5. It is most crucial to build an inclusive social protection system addressing not only the missing middle but those who are discriminated against such as homeless people and migrants. Having different interventions coming from different donors promoting different schemes does not help, but long-term social protection systems, with a broad national dialogue and well-coordinated international support, are necessary.
6. Governments should finance social protection floors by progressive tax systems as well as broaden poverty-targeted systems aiming at universal systems. People will pay

taxes if they know they are getting the benefit. Universalism would not only promote the payment of taxes but address the issue of corporate tax accountability in the light of rising income inequalities as well strong attention should be given to Micro Small and Medium Enterprises

7. Any efforts concerning official policies need to factor in a civil society enabling environment, respect for freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly which allows civil society organizations to perform their roles. Protect, enable, and build civil society space to ensure civil society organizations can perform to their full capacity in addressing these challenges.
8. The States should support the process of strengthening labour organizations and associations (trade unions) that monitor labour standards and wages, nutritional and social security entitlements.
9. The States must finance special and additional programmes for livelihood creation and social protection for low-income households, with a special focus on DWD communities and women with co-vulnerabilities like disability.
10. The States must finance COVID-19 recovery programmes for livelihood restoration and income enhancement of the informal sector workers, both women, and men.
11. The States must collect community and sex-disaggregated data on beneficiaries of social protection schemes/programmes to inform their plans and programmes and reach the excluded marginalized groups. Under SDG 17.18 governments have committed to disaggregate by age, sex, disability, etc.
12. The States should design and enforce systems to register the informal sector workers and bring them under the social protection system including healthcare, nutrition, and education.
13. The National Human Rights Institutions should monitor the implementation of labour laws in the regulated and unregulated sectors, with mechanisms for time-bound grievances.

Decent and well-remunerated work

1. Going forward through social dialogue would help to put together responses that can be more inclusive, legitimate, and trickle down to the interest of people. In this regard, it is very important to look at what we do, but also how we do it.
 - The education, Health, and Care sectors need to be at the forefront to rebuild strategies out of the crisis. It is also important to look at jobs in the digital sector, and green jobs that need to be promoted through just transition.
 - Transition workers into new jobs by providing skills training, providing social protection measures to help in their transition, and do this in dialogue with workers and employers representatives.

- To invest in these jobs, there is a need to promote adequate fiscal space. Mobilize resources by reallocating public expenditures towards these investments, increase tax revenue through progressive taxation, tackling illicit financial flows, tax evasion, and corruption, expanding social security coverage, ODA, and contributory revenues as well as providing debt relief and debt restructuring. An important element of raising revenue and fundamentally creating rights is tackling precarious work. The financing base can be increased through investments for social protection schemes that will generate more tax revenue in general.
- It is important to provide access and contributions from informal economy workers. It is important to formalize informal workers on the basis of recommendation 204 of the ILO that will lead to greater inclusion, more rights and to contribute to support social security systems and tax base.

2. A suggested six phased social dialogue plan:

- Understand and agree on starting assumptions. (e.g., dignity of all; decent work; proper remuneration for work done)
- Evidence-based approach. Austerity is not an option.
- Identifying the challenges at all levels considering the softer elements such as dogma (e.g., belief that rising tide will lift all the boats) to the more specific elements (e.g., macroeconomic policies need to be identified, prejudice against certain populations, prejudice against certain kind of work or what is considered productive)
- Consult; identify solutions (e.g., an international tax body) and the barriers to achieving them.
- Evidence-based and publicly informed policy decisions. (e.g., just transition)
- Costed with return-on-investment calculations. This would help convince those who are closest to decision-makers.

3. Devise policies

- To map where DWD communities exist
- To develop microeconomic data-driven instruments to understand what is happening to these communities and
- To include language which identifies these communities and includes their concerns in the social dialogue.

4. Governments must:

- Invest to support women, parents, and other caregivers doing essential yet unpaid or underpaid care work.
- Recognize that unpaid care work is work, which is supported by resolution 2013 of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians

- Redefine care work with a holistic concept where both paid and unpaid care work are combined.
 - Invest in accessible public infrastructure and services with a gender lens with the intent of reducing time spent on domestic chores and care work.
- 5. Private companies must contribute to supporting workers with unpaid care responsibilities. This also calls for investing in social protection floors including maternity protection as well as offering training programmes for women who want to enter the labour market after maternity leave.
- 6. Crisis provides a unique opportunity for systemic change and a human-centered economy. It is important to optimize resources by working with communities, local governments, and civil society organizations to assess the actual needs of communities by involving them, including women.
- 7. Formalize informal support services and care provisions with capacity building and integration of grassroots workers already engaged in outreach to communities into the formal economy. E.g. Home-based caregivers: - outreach projects run by NGOs. e.g., HIV AIDS programmes in Zambia, Zimbabwe. In addition, find ways for companies to pay the equivalent of tax rebates for the upgrading of funding to barefoot workers at the village level.
- 8. There needs to be a multilateral justice mechanism to help migrants reclaim their unpaid wages - wages they earned and in part are spent in the countries they live and work in and wages close to a trillion-dollar are returned to their countries of origin and communities.

Universal Access to Education, Skills, and Lifelong Learning

1. Pay special attention to digital inclusion, and smaller class sizes. Access to the internet should be free and accessible to vulnerable communities.
2. It is important for governments to listen, investigate, and do real needs assessments before building solutions. Develop solutions hand in hand with the field workers. People who are to benefit from the solutions are not part of discussions to provide recommendations. Solutions are easy to use but not aligned with the needs.
3. In 75 countries, levy-based training fund partnerships between the private sector and government enterprises are providing supplementary funds for training the workforce. In many cases, there are millions of dollars of surplus funds that have not been allocated. It is important to have a coordinated mechanism to ensure these funds are effectively allocated.
4. Governments must focus on basic adult education. It has been the case that even if the families are sent computers, the family of the child may not have the skill sets to manipulate the technology. Public schools must ensure that in addition to children,

adults have the necessary skill sets to help the children in their remote study setting and public funding must be allocated for such skills training.

5. The state should launch schemes to provide access to digital tools required for learning on subsidiary rates under the ministry of skill development and education. There is a need to allocate resources in their budgets for making such provisions, especially in the government schools.
6. From a cost-benefit perspective, a broad consensus now exists that benefits derived from Early Childhood Education and Care intervention far outweigh the costs. The estimated rate of returns for investments in quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) for disadvantaged children is 13% per year. The returns include reduced poverty and income gaps, improved outcomes in education and health, and crime reduction. Providing universal ECD services for all groups can significantly narrow economic and education inequality gaps, thus reducing the risks of conflict. If you change the beginning of the story, you can change all the story.
7. Governments must incentivize the Technical and Vocational Training (TVET) programmes to recruit women, Persons With Disability, marginalized racial and ethnic groups, by creating legislation that works to demand the intake of marginalized groups into skilled training programmes, by fulfilling recruiting quotas or providing scholarships and bursaries.
8. Developed systems of validation of knowledge, skills, and competencies on lower levels, such as Open College Network, has proven to be most helpful both to meet the demand for workers in certain fields (such as assistant nurses) and also gives a possibility for low educated persons to get a job.
9. Corporations should be encouraged to provide opportunities in "internal training" & monitoring" to newly recruited young employees. as well as supporting the recruitment financially, and making Corporate Social Responsibility a customary law (example of the new rules in Section 135 of India's Companies Act make it mandatory for companies of a certain turnover and profitability to spend two percent of their average net profit for the past three years on CSR)
10. Skills training customized to the needs of women and girls must be made available. In the case of residential training programmes, travel support to training centers must be facilitated by the government.
11. Increasingly, the private sector is touted as a key stakeholder with the capabilities and resources to address the "education crisis". The private sector should contribute to building an enabling environment, but the private sector should not lead the education governance, which is clearly a State central obligation. The participation of big corporations in national and international policy spaces on education should depend on companies having a reputation for solidarity, transparency, and reciprocity – and paying fair taxes where they make profits is perhaps the most critical indicator of this.
12. States and the international community must ensure the continuity of learning for all persons, including those who are most disadvantaged and likely to be excluded.

Distance and virtual education are an option only if people have access to technology, so closing the digital and technological gap should be a priority.

13. Set progressive national budgeting, including the continued payment and incentives of teachers and school staff. National budgeting for Education requires four central obligations: Increasing the share of budgets for education, Increasing the size of budgets overall, Increasing the sensitivity of budgets to respond to the most marginalized, and Increasing the scrutiny of budgets, so governments are accountable to people. Setting progressive budgeting obviously requires tax justice schemes: this would be a fundamental shift in how the private sector engages with and supports the public sector in education.
14. The international architecture for cooperation in education should be strengthened, so the Global Partnership for Education and the Education Cannot Wait Fund can get the resources needed to support fragile and low-income countries.
15. It is important to ensure age and disability-friendly education for all ages, digital literacy to reach all over the life course, and implement truly inclusive policies.
16. The International Community should consider debt cancellation and debt relief to unlock funds in developing countries' budgets and ensure that the provision of additional finance does not put countries at higher risk of debt distress.
17. These times offer a unique opportunity for all to review the current privatization and utilitarian trends of education and strengthen the public education systems, so education remain as an enabling right, not only responding to the employer's needs but to the development of respect for human dignity, as the Convention on the rights of the child states.

Capable states sustainably financed

1. Reform the architecture of the international financial system, in particular, re-examining the role of institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF.
2. Introduce a new taxation system that can better respond to the increasing digitalization and interconnectedness between countries.
3. Assess the impact of "financialization" on the economy to shrink the roles of the financial system and refocus the economy on "real" and productive sectors.
4. Re-examine the role of the state. In particular, the state must ensure that the policy they introduced reflects the reality faced by various stakeholders.
5. Ensure effective contribution by the private sector in developing social protection policy. In this regard, to leverage on the increasing awareness among private sector actors on issues such as ESG and sustainability.
6. Explore the use of domestic resources to finance public and social spending to avoid reliance on external resources.
7. Introduce legislation or policy to support the effective contributions of civil society organizations in the policymaking process.

8. Enhance the accountability of public and private sectors in the delivery of social services.
9. Prioritise gender issues and address continuous discrimination against women. Without real international reform, gender issues will not be addressed.
10. Incorporate climate and environmental perspectives and stop fossil fuel subsidies. Include nature-based solutions to support adaptation and mitigation of climate crisis and COVID-related economic crisis.
11. All countries should formally set up social framework systems without waiting for initiatives from international organizations.
12. Public resources should not be used as de-risking tools for private investment by Multinational corporations.
13. Sound global debt restructuring mechanisms can help to limit the power of Credit Rating Agencies and the IMF who are implementing conditionalities that are politically motivated and not based on economic fundamentals.
14. Raise more awareness about Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) and enact national legislation to encourage/support the participation of civil society organizations in designing the INFF policies.

Women and Health

1. The contribution of women to health and care in this pandemic must be recorded and remembered. We need to change the narrative. Women are users of health systems, but they also deliver health systems. Too often women's work is made invisible, dismissed as part of the care work that gender norms dictate is 'women's work', and men need not do it.
2. Countries must collect sex-disaggregated data on the number of people, working unpaid and underpaid in health and care. This transparency will be the first step towards evaluating the costs and benefits of investing in decent work for women in the health and care sector.
3. Unpaid and underpaid work in health systems must end and workers should be moved into formal health system roles and paid. The cost of this investment should be weighed against the cost of the gender inequities in health and care that have undermined health security and therefore hindered a cost-effective response to COVID-19.

Resources shared:

- [Social Panorama of Latin America \(cepal.org\)](https://www.cepal.org/)
- The social contract and the role of universal social security in building trust in government - [Social-Contract-paper-Nov242020FINAL \(1\).pdf \(svenskakyrkan.se\)](https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/Social-Contract-paper-Nov242020FINAL%20(1).pdf)
- Concept Note on the Global Fund for Social Protection here: http://www.socialprotectionfloorscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020_GCSPF_Global_Financing_Mechanism_for_Social_Protection.pdf
- Civil Society Call for a Global Fund for Social Protection- <http://www.socialprotectionfloorscoalition.org/civil-society-call/civil-society-call-for-a-global-fund-for-social-protection/>
- Delivered by Women, Led by Men: A Gender and Equity Analysis of the Global Health and Social Workforce. WHO. 2019. <https://www.who.int/hrh/resources/health-observer24/en/>
- Gender Equal Health and Care workforce Initiative <https://www.who.int/initiatives/beijing25/gender-equal-health-and-care-workforce-initiative>
- The civil Society letter on issuing Special Drawing Rights is here in EN/FR/ES: <https://www.latindadd.org/2021/02/12/civil-society-organizations-call-for-quick-special-drawing-rights-allocation/>
- CIVICUS Monitor - <https://monitor.civicus.org/>
- What is learning poverty? <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/brief/what-is-learning-poverty>
- Investing in the Care Economy- A gender analysis of employment stimulus in seven OECD countries- https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/care_economy_en.pdf
- The gendered employment gains of investing in social vs. physical infrastructure: evidence from simulations across seven OECD countries. Jerome De Henau and Susan Himmelweit. 2020. <https://www.open.ac.uk/ikd/sites/www.open.ac.uk.ikd/files/files/working-papers/DeHenauApril2020v3.pdf>