



Global Coalition for **SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS**

The 55th session of the Commission for Social Development: Statement of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors.

The choice of *Strategies for the Eradication of Poverty to Achieve Sustainable Development for All* as the priority theme of the 55th session of the Commission for Social Development is timely and of utmost importance as it firmly embeds anti-poverty efforts undertaken globally and nationally in the context of the SDG framework. Striking a balance between social, environmental and economic goals is essential to ensure that the benefits of growth reach all people, especially those still living in

poverty. Evidence confirms that eradication of poverty can bring numerous opportunities and benefits to society, facilitating concrete actions on the road towards sustainable development. At the same time, it is widely recognized that the effective efforts aimed at poverty eradication are closely linked to mitigation and adaptation policies.

Created in 2012, the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, which now

brings together close to 100 members worldwide, organizes its activities on the principles of inclusiveness, integration, non-discrimination and mutual respect. We strongly support the efforts of all stakeholders participating in the work of the Commission for Social Development aimed at finding new policy solutions that have immediate and lasting impacts on poverty and on inequality.

People-centered policies prevent and reduce poverty, uphold the dignity of individuals, families and groups in situations of risk and insecurity. With judicious foresight, such policies are tools of empowerment and emancipation. Crucially, these policies – properly conceived and implemented – make clear economic sense by allowing individuals to enhance human capital, employability and productive assets. Concomitantly, these strategies facilitate social integration, effective governance and optimal trade-offs in the pursuit of inclusive growth, productive capacity and sustainable development.

Members of the Global Coalition support social protection as a human right, an instrumental investment in people, and an indispensable strategy for ending poverty, insecurity and exclusion at the

most fundamental level. Reaffirming this commitment, we support the *Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection* initiative unveiled during the

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UN General Assembly on 21 September 2016. Jointly supported by the ILO and the World Bank, and bringing together a variety of key development partners – including intergovernmental bodies, international agencies, and non-governmental organizations, this global partnership looks to increase the number of countries providing universal social protection; supporting countries in the design and implementation of universal and sustainable social protection systems. This bolsters recent significant political breakthroughs in this field internationally, enhancing political

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momentum for social protection worldwide.

Universality in the provision of social protection remains our most important goal. The need to provide social protection to all members of society – fostering social justice, integration, cohesion and resilience – is widely recognized internationally; however, much more movement is needed at the national level. Immense gaps persist between the recognition that social protection is a development priority, and the disparate reality on the ground. We cannot tacitly accept the fact that 73 per cent of the world’s population – millions of men, women and children – are deprived of even the most basic forms of social protection, including secure income and access to essential public services.

We as a Coalition particularly reiterate our support for ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). Raising awareness of Recommendation

202 is one of the core aims of the Global Coalition. The Recommendation 202 provides practical guidance for setting such floors and building comprehensive social security systems for all – highlighting that social protection floors must not be used to regress social protection guarantees. It is a vital tool for the promotion of the rights-based approach to social protection, protecting the right to social security as a matter of entitlement and not charity – a fundamental principle in which we unequivocally and unanimously endorse. We welcome and support the growing system-wide cooperation of the UN agencies and programs in this area, as

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well as the active participation and involvement of other stakeholders.

We invite the Commission to prioritize the issues of inequality and poverty reduction in a comprehensive manner,

linking human rights with the social protection of individuals and communities. Universal social protection is an important enabling factor conducive to protecting these rights, developing human potential, and reducing income inequalities. Giving weight to the importance of essential material conditions that are required for living with dignity, social protection facilitates upholding human dignity as a value and a legal principle, confirming its central place within social and economic rights. Moreover, it is an essential material prerequisite for the effective empowerment of people, and the social and economic integration needed to enjoy civil and political rights.

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continuing basis. Spending priorities are established at the national level reflecting varied and often competing values, cultures and social histories, and political trade-offs. Creating a financing mix which optimizes both contributory and non-contributory programmes can facilitate implementing “nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors” as specified by Sustainable Development Goal 1.3. Communities are the best authors of their shared destiny, and it is this national variation which must inform the character of the financing

and funding mechanisms appropriate to the realities of their needs and capacities. Social protection must be realized through contextually relevant social insurance, tax-funded social benefits, social assistance services, public work programmes, and other schemes guaranteeing basic income security. The Coalition reiterates that access to social protection, including basic income security and essential health care, should be guaranteed to anyone who needs such protection without discrimination.

We recognize the unique capacity of social protection to reduce insecurity and deprivation across the world, and as an effective means to strengthening social approaches augmenting economic dynamism and allowing for the preservation and sustainable use of the environmental commons. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has bolstered the social protection discourse, moving it forward on both the national and international

level. The international community has recognized the most important role played by social protection in eradicating poverty and achieving various sustainable development goals. Social protection is referred to in the Agenda as a fundamental element contributing to better outcomes in the areas of health, gender, decent work, inclusive growth, and inequality reduction. The impetus created by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda signifies a new window of opportunity for all stakeholders in finding innovative solutions to the world's most pressing development challenges, including universal social protection.

A draft ECOSOC resolution on social protection systems would be a necessary political step towards universal and comprehensive social protection for all.

As a Global Coalition, we recognize a new and dedicated high-level political “push” at the international level – aimed at upholding social protection as a stand-alone issue – is needed. This is particularly acute in the context of intergovernmental policy dialogue and

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negotiations conducted at the United Nations following the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Such an outcome of the multilateral negotiations would make it possible to capitalize on the growing recognition of the significant role that social protection systems, including floors, play in societies.

In consideration of this, we hereby endorse the proposal addressed to the UN Member States working within the remit of the 55th session of the Commission for Social Development,

namely, to consider elaborating a draft ECOSOC resolution on social protection systems, including floors as a necessary political step towards universal and comprehensive social protection for all.

We urge the delegates to take into account the deep links between social protection and sustainable economic growth. Once social protection floors are established and become operational at the national level, the achievement of several core targets of the SDGs, starting with the reduction of poverty, comes within reach.

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We propose that the following elements, comprising basic social security guarantees and constituting a nationally defined set of essential goods and services, be included in such a resolution:

a) essential health care, including maternity care, meeting the criteria of

availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality;

b) basic income security for children, assuring access to nutrition, education and care;

c) basic income security for persons of active age, with particular attention to sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability; and

d) basic income security for older persons in consideration of their needs, protected from devaluation or manipulation, and as a matter of entitlement.

The adoption of a dedicated UN resolution on social protection systems is essential in focusing attention to key issues pertinent to universal social

protection. This includes floors and the diverse benefits for society, reinforcing the political impact of ILO Recommendation No. 202. A dedicated UN resolution would bear testimony to a high-level political commitment to advance social protection at all levels, simultaneously advancing the objectives of the political constituency of the Commission itself. Indeed, such a resolution would fit within the Follow-Up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, and would be essential in embedding social protection in the agenda of the Commission for Social Development – facilitating national implementation and consistent system-wide monitoring of the agreed conclusions.

<http://www.socialprotectionfloorscoalition.org/>

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