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**The case for a joint effort to invest into Social Protection Floors**

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* Thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to this panel on behalf of the **Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors**. We are a global network of civil society organizations, trade unions and think tanks committed to contribute to the implementation of social protection floors for all.

*(Social Protection Floors- a whole-of-society approach to well-being)*

* *As stated by Minister Sarkkinen and reiterated by all speakers:* Social protection is a human right. It is an integral part of the **decent work agenda** and an **investment with high social and economic returns**.
* Social Protection Floors, as defined by ILO Recommendation 202, **embody a** **whole-of-society approach to social and economic well-being**. It first and foremost contains the commitment to guarantee access to minimum livelihood security and essential health care for all members of society.

*(The social protection gap in the face of predictable crises)*

* More than half the world’s population does not have access to any social protection, and it is important to note that **coverage remains particularly limited in low-income countries.**
* **Within countries, it remains low for vulnerable groups** as well as for women and men who work in the informal economy. *We just heard perspectives of those left furthest behind.*
* Gaps in social protection make individuals and groups, but also entire societies, vulnerable to risks and crises. In the event of a disaster, poverty is then exacerbated, existing inequality deepened and resilience to future crises further weakened.

*(Window of opportunity – the time has come)*

* But, now there is a **window of opportunity**: Social Protection has **gained in priority on the agenda of many Governments**. *Priscilla just gave us an interesting insight into how the African Union is promoting progress on the right of all Citizens of Africa to Social Protection*.
* This is not only a result of the experiences from the pandemic and its particularly adverse impacts on countries without social protection systems. Increasing frequency and intensity of adverse weather events are already a reality. They strengthen awareness for the need to build up sustainable and adaptive social protection systems without further delay.
* **Social Protection also gained importance on the international Agenda**: On the Road to a Social Summit 2025 the UN initiative for a **Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection** is very timely.
* The Accelerator aims to support countries to create 400 million decent jobs and to extend social protection coverage to the 4 billion people currently excluded. Such an extraordinary joint effort is critical to envision a just transition; otherwise, SDG achievement will definitely fail.
* As part of the initiative, the Global Accelerator **foresees a 600 Mio. technical assistance fund**, to bring together national and international expertise and provide advisory services to countries. This is an important start.

*(A Global Fund for Social Protection is needed)*

* However, there is an additional need for **a more ambitious financing mechanism for social protection**, as proposed by our colleague Michael Cichon, by the UN-Special Rapporteurs Magdalena Sepulveda and Olivier de Schutter and others. Low Income countries will need further financial support for institution building and for social protection floor delivery. Otherwise, it will not be possible to reach those who have been left furthest behind.
* A successful global social policy should state **and** deliver rights, on national level this means real world implementation of rights-based social protection systems.
* The Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors has commissioned a number of studies, including costing estimates and impact modeling for country cases. They clearly show that about 31 countries could not afford the cost of social protection floors without international solidarity. They also show how the impact on poverty reduction could be enormous.
* **The solidarity-based funding mechanism we envision** should meet the following criteria:
1. It should be able to contribute to the development of **rights-based national social protection systems.** Therefore it needs to provide long-term, reliable support.
2. Following the social policy **principle of solidarity**, it should be endowed with resources according to the financial capacity of states and disbursed according to social needs.
3. Support to social protection systems in highly indebted countries should only be made **on the basis of grants**.
4. It is important to make sure that the financial support provides **additional resources**. The reallocation of other ODA funds or a zero-sum game between different social sectors would not be effective, since the desired effects can only be achieved in interaction between the different social sectors (e.g. health and education).
5. The **governance mechanisms** of the financial mechanism should give equal decision- making power to contributing and implementing governments.
6. The UN and its specialised agencies, especially the ILO, need to play a leading role.
7. Decisions regarding design and implementation of social protection floors have to be taken by the government of the recipient country, based on national dialogues with social partners and civil society (**country ownership**).
8. **Civil society should be given full participation** on national and global level.

*(Conclusion)*

* We claim that there is a strong case to jointly invest into a more ambitious global financing mechanism for Social Protection Floors that will bring an end to poverty, extreme inequality, ill-health and avoidable deaths associated with the current and future crises.
* We call on the United Nations, on Governments and civil society actors to work together on the universal roll out of national social protection floors. It is the human right of all people in all countries that should be realized through the principle of national and global solidarity.
* A new world Social Summit 2025 would be an appropriate forum to boost a global initiative supporting social policy development, specifically a Global Fund for Social Protection.

(Final Remark)

* And if you allow me a last remark: Today’s event would like to honour the work of Prof. **Michael Cichon**. He was not only committed member and tireless advisor of the Global Coalition. He has been an inspiring example to so many people around the world. He pushed social protection standards, namely the ILO Recommendation 202 on Social Protection Floors, and his wish was to see it become a Convention in the fullness of time.

But he also trained so many professionals to make their implementation and monitoring real and he always kept reminding us, that without international solidarity-based funding there won’t be social protection floors in those countries that have been left furthest behind.

**Publications**

[**Creating fiscal and policy space**:](http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/genf/18914.pdf) A pragmatic two-pronged global implementation strategy for universal social protection / **Michael Cichon and Hajo Lanz**.
Bonn; Geneva : Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e.V. ; FES Geneva, February 2022. ISBN 978-3-98628-071-0
[**http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/genf/18914.pdf**](http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/genf/18914.pdf)

* The authors suggest a simple, feasible, pragmatic and affordable global strategy to support
the attainment of social protection for all as a central means to combat poverty, inequality, insecurity and ill-health; the strategy involves:
	+ Establishing a new international standard of universal social protection or universal social
	protection floors to extend the policy space for social protection on the national
	level and
	+ Pivotal, targeted support for the temporary extension of national fiscal space for social
	protection in the poorest countries through a Global Fund for Social Protection or
	a similar financing facility.

[**Financing social protection**:](http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/19401.pdf) Domestic and external options in low-income countries / **Marcus Manuel** ; Issuing Department: Division for International Cooperation, Global and European Policy. - Bonn ; Geneva : Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Geneva/Brot für die Welt, Berlin, March 2022.
ISBN 978-3-98628-133-5
[**http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/19401.pdf**](http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/19401.pdf)

* ODI estimates reveal that most low-income countries (LICs) have a limited potential to increase their total level of tax revenue. This analysis reinforces the case made in the past for additional external funding to support those countries that cannot afford universal SP. Greater funding for SP in LICs would correct the current imbalance in donor support across the social sector and would complement donor investment for other sectors, since the cash benefits would facilitate greater access to education and to water, sanitation and hygiene services.

[**A global fund for social protection**](http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/genf/19167.pdf): Views from selected low-income countries / **Charles Lwanga-Ntale ;** Issuing Department: Division for International Cooperation / Global and European Policy. - Bonn ; Geneva : Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Geneva/Brot für die Welt Berlin, April 2022.
ISBN 978-3-98628-128-1
[**http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/genf/19167.pdf**](http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/genf/19167.pdf)

* The study on low-income countries’ (LICs) views of the proposed Global Fund for Social Protection (GFSP) sought to contribute to discussions on the operational dimensions of the fund, adding to existing knowledge on the available financial and administrative options. Findings from this study point us to several broad areas of interest, including the political economy, systems and structures, technical and financial capacity to implement, and accountability.