

**Statement in the Development Cooperation Forum on behalf of
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
United Nations, New York, 15 March 2023**

Madam President,

My name is Barry Herman, and I make this statement on behalf of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, a member of the NGO Committee on Financing for Development in New York, a substantive committee of the Conference of NGOs, and on behalf of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, a network of over 100 NGOs and labour organizations that advocates for enhanced social protection around the world. We all share a keen interest in this morning's discussion.

The NGO Committee and the Global Coalition regard social protection as a human right. An adequate package of social protection programs would help ameliorate the inherent risks of daily life from conception to old age. It would help empower people to contribute more to society and lead lives of dignity. However, social protection must have an adequate standing in every country's fiscal accounts.

Governments should want adequate, effective, efficient, universal and sustainable social protection systems. In many countries—rich, poor, and in between—governments are overly influenced by the rich and the companies they control. They would rather starve social protection of needed funds than accept their fiscal responsibility to society.

NGOs, such as the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, are hard pressed to fill the gap. In fact, they cannot marshal the resources needed. It must be a government responsibility.

How does international cooperation fit into this picture?

First, donor governments and international institutions can use their voices to strengthen the global call for adequate and universal social protection systems.

Second, they can help governments develop these systems when requested.

The development community works in this direction, but it has to do more.

Further policy and cultural reforms are warranted.

One example is the policy on social spending that the International Monetary Fund adopted in 2019. The new policy encourages IMF to engage with UN agencies as well as with the World Bank on social spending. It furthermore recognizes the value of taking into consideration the expertise of civil society in the countries its missions visit.

In fact, we see greater IMF cooperation with UN agencies and civil society. However, austerity pressures seem to still come down too hard on developing economies. We still struggle to ring fence social spending during austerity drives and then adequately

expand it and the taxation it requires.

It is nonetheless good to hear the progress that countries are reporting here today.

Civil society recognizes that advancing social protection is an inevitable struggle at domestic and international levels. It is a struggle that we fully embrace.

Thank you, Madam President