Arguments to use when advocating for universality

Be an expert universal social security advocate

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Tuesday 21st March 2023
Part 2 - Agenda

- **2.50** - Presentation of section 2 and 3: Arguments and targets for advocacy

- **3.05** - Comments from Richard Obiga and David Tumwesigye

- **3.15** - Q&A from participants

- **3.30** - End
10 Key Arguments for Universal Social Security

- Winning elections
- Popularity
- Building trust in government
- Tackling inequality
- Compensating the losers in fossil fuel reforms
- Greater economic growth
- Removal of poverty-targeted work disincentives
- Reaching informal economy workers
- Available fiscal space
- All will benefit (including the rich!)
If a scheme targets the poorest, it will not be popular, since it excludes most of the population, including the main taxpayers.

If a scheme is given to everyone, then it is likely that it will have strong popular support and, therefore, have political backing.

Low income

High income
Building trust in government and the social contract

Citizens

Contribute to the nation

High quality universal public services based on entitlements

Government
In Syria, Arab Spring protests turned into a large-scale civil war that is ongoing today. The roots of the crises may be traced back to breakdown of the national social contract. The existing discontent was likely exacerbated by the removal of vital subsidies and the introduction of a poverty targeted benefit.
Including the rich is also important for the social contract

Biggest winners from universal system are those on the lowest incomes

The richest are the biggest financial losers

Net winners

Net funders

Change in consumption after taxation and transfers

Pre-transfer consumption percentiles
Incomes among majority increase, including missing middle.

Incomes fall among minority of those who are better-off.
Across Asia, universal systems are much more effective in tackling inequality than poverty-targeted systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage change in Gini coefficient</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>-25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>-16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>-8.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>-20.7%</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>-15.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>-1.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>0%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Elements of a universal lifecycle system**

**Poverty-targeted social assistance system**
Greater economic growth

Inject money into economies to drive demand & build markets

Smooth consumption during economic shocks

Increase investment in productive activities

Generate higher levels of employment and better jobs

Nurture a healthier & more productive labour force

Empower persons with disabilities

Stimulate economic recovery from shocks

Extend financial services

Strengthen human capital through health & education outcomes

Reduce inequality which can impede growth

Strengthen national social cohesion & investment climate

Stronger & more inclusive economic growth

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Stronger & more inclusive economic growth
Advocates should consistently refer to universal social security as an investment rather than as a cost.

Social Protection Intervention

- By tackling undernutrition and ensuring better education, children will become a more productive and skilled labour force.
- If people have greater income security and money available, they are more likely to invest in small businesses.
- Spending money generates an economic stimulus and provides markets for entrepreneurs.
Finding fiscal space for key lifecycle benefits

Childhood
- Child benefit

Working age
- Unemployment and sickness benefits
- Parental benefits
- Survivors’ benefit
- Disability benefits

Old age
- Old Age Pension
Available fiscal space

The level of investment required to introduce progressively universal child, disability and old age benefits in Egypt, between 2022 and 2035

- Introduce old age pension for 70+ years
- Two years later, introduce universal disability benefits
Targets for advocacy

Apply your legal system

- Consider if your legal system allows you to hold your government accountable to realise the right to social security

Use a mixture of methods to reach your targets

- Meet with them directly
- Work through political parties and members of Parliament
- Identify champions and public figures who can lead public advocacy

Identify key targets

- Political leaders of the country,
- The President, Prime Minister and, the Minister of Finance
- Use a mix of media including newspapers, television, and social media platforms
- Work with civil society organisations

Consider if your legal system allows you to hold your government accountable to realise the right to social security
Thank you