

Joint Statement-WSF2024

Workshop Series on Towards Universal Social Protection

The statement is [here](#).

A video clip on Universal Social Protection developed by AROSP: <https://youtu.be/1f6udlGNaHg>

As the world economy produces more goods, grows at a rapid pace, and generates more and more wealth and profits, the disparity between those at the top of the pyramid and those at the bottom is increasing exponentially. Despite producing more, working longer hours, and sacrificing more, vulnerable people around the world now have less access to healthcare, quality education, civic services, and housing. In a world where work and income are far from secure, the lack of guaranteed access to necessities for workers and their families is a serious and often tragic issue. At least 8 million people die every year simply due to a lack of quality health care. In 2020, almost 800 women died every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. On top of this, women undertake three times as much unpaid care work as men in Asia and two times more than men globally. The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has left a multitude of public service workers in dire straits, especially in health and sanitation (where service provision has increasingly been contracted out to private firms), since such workers were all hired under sub-contractual outsourcing systems and therefore have no guarantee of future employment. Inequality is omnipresent and takes a number of different forms. Within the household, there exist inequalities between boys and girls and between men and women. Nor is equality maintained in education, in the distribution of skill, or in employment opportunities. Women are facing discriminatory behaviors first in accessing employment and then, for women who are employed, in accessing financial resources. This gender inequality fuels patriarchy, empowering men and forcing women to take losses, which then creates a situation in which men grow more powerful and women weaker. The absence of gender-responsive budgeting mechanisms, that focus financing on social protection presents systemic barriers for the implementation of social protection in a holistic manner.

Discussing universal social protection becomes challenging in the midst of war and conflicts that resulted in the loss of lives, injuries, and the displacement of millions of people from their homes, depriving them of essential rights such as access to health, food, clean water and education, with the most substantial of these casualties being women and children.

In these circumstances, all people must be assured access to comprehensive social protection, encompassing housing and civic services, healthcare, education, unemployment allowances, maternity cash assistance, and pensions for the elderly, whether they are employed or not. Within the broad framework of social protection for all, there must also be a particular focus on addressing the needs of people with disabilities and workers within the informal economy, and concerted efforts should be made to organize spaces and systems that facilitate their ability to lead secure and productive lives. Additionally, everyone should be guaranteed a decent life from the womb to the tomb.

We, including 200 people from different organizations participating in the World Social Forum 2024 in Kathmandu, gathered for Universal Social Protection, jointly state the following:

1. Universal Social Protection. We are committed to collective action, advocating for the rights and dignity of all, recognizing that universal social protection is not merely a cost or charity but an inherent right and a crucial investment. Our pledge involves rejecting poverty targeting in favor of universality, ensuring that disability benefits, child benefits, pension and maternity rights reach every individual. We emphasize the importance of day care services for working mothers, the elimination of child labor and abuse, and the provision of free and quality education for a better tomorrow. We acknowledge the significance of #CareWorkMakesAllOtherWorksPossible and strive to achieve decent work for all. Our unwavering commitment extends to quality public services and healthcare, opposing privatization and advocating for increased investment in public healthcare. We pledge to prioritize people over profit, advocating for living wages and ensuring financial benefits are easily accessible to all. In our comprehensive approach, we recognize that building a society that values the well-being, rights, and dignity of all is a collective responsibility. Keeping in view the exclusion of workers within the Informal Economy from the social protection floors, we demand the establishment of Maternity protection boards for informal workers across the region. Maternity benefits must be extended to all women irrespective of age, marital status and income category and must be applicable to all pregnancies. Adequate universal social protection coverage should also include the possibility to adapt and use schemes in case of large-scale shocks, especially in a context of increasing catastrophes exacerbated because of the climate crisis, but also including phenomena like Covid-19 which especially affected informal workers.

2. Gender Equality and Justice. Advocating for Gender-Responsive Budgeting and gender-friendly markets, we emphasize the imperative need to remove the obstacles hindering women's career advancement, and push for the proportionate representation of women in all walks of life, including employment, administration, and parliament. Recognizing that promoting Gender Equality requires active championing by men, we assert the necessity to halt gender-based violence. Additionally, fostering a society that embraces dignified menstruation is the collective responsibility of all. Social protection is also a powerful tool to ensure inclusivity of LGBTIQA+ workers and their families.

3. Economic Justice and Decent Work. In our comprehensive approach, we advocate for a Solidarity Economy, ensuring Equal Access to Financial Resources, and ending Workplace Harassment to create safe working conditions. Recognizing the importance of Women's Engagement in the Labor Market, we value and recognize Care Work, strive for a Living Wage for Social Protection, and emphasize Decent Work for All, promoting fair labor practices and safe working conditions.

4. Social Justice and Human Rights. Given our commitment to Youth Health as fundamental for a healthy nation, we acknowledge the significance of unpaid care work. Consequently, we are actively working towards its integration into national accounts. Moreover, we advocate for the availability of easily accessible centers facilitating digital benefit applications for all, ensuring streamlined access to essential services and support.

5. Gender Transformative Quality Public Services. Our advocacy revolves around championing Quality Public Services. Opposing privatisation, we instead promote the public ownership and management of public services. Our fight is for equal access to quality public services and for the rights of the workers delivering them. We emphasize the essential need for public services to be in the public's hands.

6. Social Responsibility. Our commitment lies in prioritizing People Over Profit, working towards Poverty Alleviation, and advocating for Social Profitability within the framework of a Social Solidarity Economy. We emphasize the importance of placing human well-being ahead of financial gains and fostering economic models that prioritize broader societal benefits over narrow interests.

March 2024

Signed by:

Organisations/ networks

Asian Roundtable on Social Protection (AROSP).

Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC),

Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC).

Jagriti Child and Youth Concern Nepal (JCYCN),

HomeNet Nepal (HNN),

HomeNet Pakistan (HNP),

International Network for a Human Economy (INHE).

INSP!R Nepal.

Light House, Bangladesh.

National Campaign for Women's Rights (NCWR), Nepal.

Palestinian Medical Relief Society (PMRS), Palestine.

Public Services International (PSI).

Social Protection Civil Society Network (SPCSN), Nepal.

Wise Act of Youth Visioning and Engagement Foundation (WAYVE), India.

Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU).

Centre for Workers Education, India.

Yaung Chi Oo Workers Association, Thailand & Burma.

Global Social Justice.

Perkumpulan Inisiatif, Indonesia.

Homenet Thailand.

International NGO Forum on Indonesia Development (INFID), Indonesia.

International Young Christian Workers Asia - Pacific (IYCW ASPAC).

Free Trade Union Development Center (FTUDC) Sri Lanka.

Radha Paudel Foundation.

Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation.

Alliance for integrated development Nepal - Aid Nepal.

Confederation of free trade unions of India-CFTUI.

Emmans International.

Action Aid India.

Socialist Trade Union Confederal-STUC.

Sex Workers and Allies South Asia.

Homebased Worker Concern Society Nepal.

Bhupendra National Forum for Creches and Childcare Services India.

HomeNet South Asia.

Consejo Education Popular de America Latina el Caribe- CEAAL.

Women's Collective Chennai India.

Women's Revolution in North East Syria.

Women Forum for Women in Nepal.

Nawhral Shyamsan Mukti Nepal.

Federation of women with Disability Nepal - FWDN.

Nepal Disabled Women Association -NDWA.

South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication.

Forum for Wildlife and Environment Preserve (FOWEP) Nepal.

Tasangini Foundation.

Worec Nepal.

Nepal Boceia Association for the Disabled -NBAD.

Action Aid India.

CFTUI India.

Migrant's Forum in Asia.

Asian Cultural Forum on Development-ACFD.

Center for Peace and Civil Society-SPCS.

Children Women in Social Service and Human Rights Nepal - CWISH.
Association of Development Agencies in Bangladesh- ADAB.
REDED Nepal.
Food for Life Nepal.
Voice of Media India.
Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre- RIRDARC Nepal.
ACKAR Palestine.
Compact Foundation Bangladesh.
Basanli Nepali.
Youth for Climate India.
Workers Federation Bangladesh.
ARAKAS Nepal.
Dalit NGO/s Federation - DNF Nepal.
Red-cross Red Crescent Asia Pacific- RCRC AP.
CAN Nepal.
PCI/USA.
PSI NCC Nepal.
Laligurash Foundation Nepal.
Nepal Boccia Association for the Disabled-NBAD.
Women Workers Protection Union (WWPU).
NDWA Nepal.
DDK Bangladesh.
DBM Bangladesh.
NCC Nepal.
Confederation of Indonesian People Movement - KPRI.
International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA).
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity for the Good Shepherd.
SPELL-Solidarity for People's Education and Lifelong Learning, Philippines.
Bangladesh Social Protection Advocacy Network (BSPAN).
Labour at Informal Economy (LIE), Bangladesh.
Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress (BFTUC).

Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE foundation).

Institute of Women's Empowerment (IWE).

National Campaign for Sustainable Development Nepal.

SDGs National Network Nepal.

WSM, Belgium.

Cambodian Food Service Workers' Federation (CFSWF).

International Longevity Centre Canada.

International Longevity Center Global Alliance.

INSP!R Afrique centrale.

Chaire de Dynamique Sociale / Université de Kinshasa.

[Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors \(GCSPF\).](#)

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And other 29 individuals.