



The GCSPF contribution to the Informal Hearing for Stakeholders on the Food for Thought paper for the WSSD2



Lena Simet spoke on behalf of the GCSPF at the [Informal Hearing for Stakeholders on the Food for Thought paper](#) for the [Second World Summit for Social Development](#), that took place at the United Nations Headquarters on 22 April 2025.

The Informal Hearing was convened by H.E. Ms. Sophie De Smedt, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, and H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations, the Co-Facilitators of the intergovernmental preparatory process.

I am Lena Simet from Human Rights Watch, speaking on behalf of the [Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors \(GCSPF\)](#).

We note the [Food for Thought Paper](#)'s call for "a renewed global social contract anchored in the respect for human and labor rights and fundamental freedoms."

As we face unprecedented challenges—from demographic shifts and economic crises to escalating conflicts—this [World Social Summit for Social Development](#) presents a critical opportunity to commit to the universal realization of human rights for all people, at all stages of life. To achieve this, we need to do better at addressing root causes of inequality and injustice, and place the reduction of extreme inequalities at the heart of our efforts—this should be reflected in the Summit's outcome document.

To build a truly transformative social agenda, we must act with urgency and clarity. Governments need to uphold their obligations to existing human rights frameworks, while adopting new measures to ensure that everyone, everywhere, is included in social protection systems. This includes ensuring the right to development for all generations, across the life course, with attention to informal workers and unpaid caregivers as well as those who face age, gender, and disability-related barriers.

The right to social security lies at the core of this agenda. Yet today, half of the world's population still lacks access to any form of social security. This is even more dire in regions like Africa, and for groups such as children, mothers, persons with disabilities, older persons, and unemployed persons.

At the same time, many countries face austerity measures, often imposed by international financial institutions, that undermine the very social protection systems we are working to strengthen. The ongoing debt crisis has only deepened this problem.

The [World Social Summit for Social Development](#) should tackle these challenges head on. We call for political will and concrete measures in three areas:

1. A clear and genuine commitment from all states to establish universal social protection systems and floors. For countries without existing plans, national strategies should be developed in consultation with civil society, with clear, time-bound goals for full implementation.
2. Strengthened international cooperation, including technical expertise and financial support for countries that need assistance, as well as a mechanism for periodic reviews to ensure accountability and progress.
3. Debt relief for countries burdened by unsustainable debt, reform of international financial institutions' conditionalities that restrict social protection, and tax justice reforms to ensure multinational corporations and the wealthiest pay their fair share to fund universal social protection systems.

Thank you.