



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

FAO's role in social protection

Innovation to achieve zero hunger, reduce poverty
and build resilient communities



FAO Council side event

June 4th, 2018 13:00 – 14:30
Sheikh Zayed Centre, FAO HQ

***“With social protection,
the hungry are no longer
a mere statistic.***

***They become individuals,
with registered names and
addresses.***

***They become empowered
to escape hunger through
their own efforts, and
thus lead dignified and
productive lives”.***

José Graziano da Silva,
FAO Director-General



Social protection, food and agriculture

Three quarters of the chronically undernourished and those living in poverty reside in rural areas, especially in conflict or risk prone contexts. Many of them are not covered by adequate social protection, rely predominantly on natural resources for their livelihoods, and are particularly vulnerable and exposed to multiple risks. Yet, they play a critical role in ensuring global food security in the long term, and in sustainably managing the natural resource base in the most fragile ecosystems.

Social protection is the set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion throughout their lifecycles, particularly the most vulnerable groups. The instruments of social protection encompass social

assistance programmes such as cash transfers, in-kind transfers, vouchers, school feeding programmes, and inputs subsidies, social insurance such as health, weather, crop and old age pensions, and labor market policies, including minimum wage and unemployment benefit schemes.

In the context of FAO’s mandate, social protection involves policies and programmes that address economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty, by protecting and promoting livelihoods. This particularly means linking those who benefit from social protection also to agricultural interventions, improving their risk management capacity, access to productive inputs, technologies, financial services and markets, and improving their employability

and natural resource management, thereby maximizing the impact of social protection interventions and enabling poor people to sustainably move out of poverty.

The expansion of social protection systems is one of the targets to end poverty under the 2030 Agenda. Countries have committed to implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable. Social Protection is also explicitly acknowledged as a key contributor for the reduction of income inequality (SDG 10), while supporting SDGs 2-6 (in terms of ending hunger, access to health, education, water and gender equality), and social inclusion (SDGs 16-17).

Why invest?

Social protection helps the poorest of the poor. Social protection enables them to invest in their farms, their nutrition and health, and the education of their children, lifting them out of extreme poverty, and allowing them to take part in their local economies. Social benefits also protect them in times of crisis, so that they are not forced to sell assets, take their kids out of school, or resort to other negative strategies to cope with shocks.

While social protection is a proven way for lifting people out of poverty, only 45 per cent of the global population is effectively covered by

at least one social benefit, while the remaining 55 per cent – 4 billion people – are left unprotected. FAO works with governments to make sure social protection policies reach rural people. We also make sure that social policies are designed in such a way that they improve poor people's nutrition, propel rural development and resilient livelihoods.

Social protection is an investment in people and economic transformation, not a cost. Investments in social protection generate multiplier effects and additional income in local economies. Additionally, FAO works to (i) combine social protection

with livelihood interventions like agricultural inputs, training to enhance efficiency and market access, savings programmes, and others, allowing people to move from protection to sustainable production, address hunger and malnutrition, while increasing their resilience to future shocks; (ii) effectively enable the reach of agriculture and productive investments and programmes to poor and vulnerable rural families. This happens within a broader context to better coordinate and make more coherent social protection and agricultural policies.

FAO action in social protection

- 1 FAO, together with partners, advocates for the expansion of social protection to effectively reach men and women living in rural areas and to promote linkages between social protection and agriculture, food security, nutrition, natural resource management, decent rural employment and resilience building.
- 2 FAO maximizes the impact of social protection by facilitating cooperation between relevant line ministries, and building and strengthening nationally owned social protection systems that are integrated in broader livelihood promotion and rural development strategies.
- 3 FAO builds the economic case for the expansion of social protection programmes, and a research agenda, highlighting the role of social protection not only as a social policy tool, but also as a strategic investment to enhance the economic and productive potential of the poor.
- 4 FAO is directly implementing cash transfers, particularly in fragile and protracted crises contexts, and has developed extensive expertise in linking cash-based programmes to livelihood promotion and agricultural development, bridging the humanitarian-development divide.
- 5 FAO supports the development of risk informed and shock responsive social protection to enable a flexible, timely and adequate response to crises, thus saving livelihoods, particularly in rural areas.
- 6 FAO and its partners' impact evaluations, embedded in national policy processes, have contributed to strengthening the case for scale-up: building the credibility of an emerging sector, addressing public misconceptions linked to cash transfers, while supporting learning around programme design and implementation.

FAO collaborates with key actors in the area of social protection at the global level, as well as with regional bodies and country stakeholders. Main partners include ILO, UNICEF, the World Bank, WFP, as well as the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Union. At the regional level, FAO engages with important regional bodies to raise awareness of social protection's positive impacts on reducing hunger, malnutrition and poverty, as well as on resilient communities. At the country level, FAO works closely with ministries of agriculture, social development

and finance, rural organizations, research institutions and civil society organizations. The objective is to enhance their contribution to social protection agendas, and to strengthen synergies between social protection and policies on food security and nutrition, rural development and resilience. FAO is an active member of the Social Protection Inter-agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B), which enhances global coordination and advocacy on social protection.

Promoting coherence between agriculture and social protection

is a priority area of work towards eradicating rural poverty. Accordingly, social protection was recognized as a corporate priority for FAO and formally included as one of the organizational outcomes under the Strategic Objective to Reduce Rural Poverty (SO3). FAO's work in social protection is, however, also substantially contributing to SO1 - Eradication of Hunger, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition - and SO5 - Resilience. The work on social protection is cross-cutting, combining the expertise of several divisions, and cutting across regional initiatives.

Agenda

Time	Event
	Video FAO policy series: social protection
13:00-13:05	Welcome remarks Daniel Gustafson, <i>Deputy Director-General for Programmes, FAO</i>
13:05-13:15	The impact of social protection: best practices, successes and innovation Benjamin Davis, <i>Strategic Programme Leader, Reducing Rural Poverty, FAO</i> Dominique Burgeon, <i>Strategic Programme Leader, Resilience, FAO</i>
13:15-13:45	Roundtable discussion: expanding FAO's role at country level Amadou Canar Diop, <i>Head of Operations Division for the General Delegation for Social Protection and National Solidarity (DGPSN), Government of Sénégal</i> Wafaa Dikah Hamze, <i>Senior Adviser to the Minister of Agriculture, Government of Lebanon</i> Alfredo Suárez Mieses, <i>Secretary General of Central American Secretariat for Social Integration (SISCA), Central American Integration Systems (SICA)</i>
	Video Cash transfers: myths vs. reality
13:45-14:05	Roundtable discussion: partnering to maximize social protection impacts Jan-Artur Sienczewski, <i>Minister Counsellor, European Union Delegation, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)</i> Ugo Gentilini, <i>Senior Economist, Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice, World Bank Group</i> Christina Dankmeyer, <i>Adviser in the Sector Initiative Social Protection, Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)</i>
14:05-14:20	Q&A
14:20-14:30	The way forward: focus areas for increased cooperation and scale-up Gustavo Gonzalez, <i>Director, Resource Mobilization, FAO</i>
14:30	Closing remarks Kostas Stamoulis, <i>Assistant Director-General, Economic and Social Development Department, FAO</i>
	Poster exhibition & Light cocktail - FAO's best practices at global and country level CASH+ how to maximize the impacts of cash transfers: experiences in Lesotho, Somalia and Sahel Shock-responsive social protection: FAO's added value Social protection: experiences from Latin America Social protection: experiences from Lebanon Social protection and agriculture Nutrition-sensitive social protection

Moderator: Gustavo Gonzalez, *Director, Resource Mobilization, FAO*

Contacts

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