



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



PROCEEDINGS FROM
**TECHNICAL MEETING ON
SOCIAL PROTECTION
AS A TOOL FOR
POVERTY REDUCTION IN
THE NEAR EAST AND
NORTH AFRICA**

29th and 30th March | Beirut, Lebanon

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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CP	Complementary Programmes
ESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
EU	European Union
FAO-RNE	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations – Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPC-IG	International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth
LDCs	Least-Developed Countries
NENA	Near East and North Africa
NSDSL	National Poverty Targeting Programme of Lebanon
NSSF	National Social Development Strategy of Lebanon
OP	Overlapping Programmes
RI-SSFF	Regional Initiative for Small-Scale Family Farming
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SHC	Special Hardship Case Programme of Palestine
SHF	Small-Holder Farms
SLP	Sustainable Livelihood Programme
SOFA	State of Food and Agriculture
SPWG	Regional Social Protection Working Group
SSNRP	Social Safety Net Reform Project
UN CEB	United Nations Chief Executives Board
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

PREPARATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document presents the outcomes of the technical meeting on “Social Protection as a Tool for Poverty Reduction in the Near East and North Africa” held in Beirut, Lebanon from 29 to 30 March 2017, organized by the Regional Initiative on Small-Scale Family Farming, an initiative of the Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO RNE).

Phoebe Lewis, Marussia Scaramella, Ana Pizarro and Flavia Lorenzon prepared the document under the supervision of Alfredo Impiglia, Delivery Manager for the Regional Initiative on Small-Scale Family Farming.

BACKGROUND

Despite recent progress, almost one billion people are still living in poverty¹ and around 800 million people are food insecure.² Most of these people live in the rural areas of developing countries and are small-scale family farmers who depend on agriculture. Family farmers face difficulties accessing natural resources, public services, functioning input and output markets (e.g. credit, insurance) and local institutions. Existing social and economic vulnerabilities are further exacerbated by their exposure to natural, environmental and conflict-related shocks, impacting rural men and women. As seen in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),³ social protection is gaining importance as an intervention to eradicate poverty, food insecurity and inequalities, including those related to gender. However, it is estimated that 73 percent of the world's population does not have access to adequate social protection.⁴

The 2015 edition of the FAO State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) report highlighted the important role social protection plays not only in allowing poor families to access more and better food, but also in enhancing their fundamental economic and productive potential. SOFA further concluded that strengthened coherence and synergies between social protection and agricultural⁵ interventions would also help to maximize these impacts and ultimately help to break crippling intergenerational cycles of poverty.

Numerous studies have shown that social protection programmes have been successful in reducing hunger and poverty through the multiple benefits they provide. Such programmes allow households to increase and diversify their food consumption, improving specifically the nutritional and health status of women and children. Evidence also shows that, through greater expenditure in education and health, social protection programmes increase vulnerable households' access to these public services. This helps to reduce child labour and positively affects the future productivity and employability of the children of such households. When well implemented and based on long-term, regular and predictable transfers, social protection reinforces the resilience of vulnerable households and facilitates increased investments in both on-farm production activities (including inputs, tools and livestock) and off-farm enterprises.

¹ World Bank, 2015.

² The State of Food Insecurity in the World, FAO 2015.

³ The SDGs target for social protection calls for implementing “nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable”.

⁴ World Social Protection Report, 2014/15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice.

⁵ According to FAO, the term agriculture includes livestock, fishery and forestry.

Social protection also provides insurance that mitigates the impacts of covariate⁶ and idiosyncratic⁷ shocks and their associated negative coping strategies. Public works programmes can also directly contribute to the local economy and to the resilience of communities by providing cash transfers, important infrastructure, assets, job opportunities and, eventually, vocational training to the most vulnerable; thus supporting the sustainable development of the agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry sectors in rural and peri-urban areas. Evidence has proven that social protection programmes also generate multiplier effects in local and the rural economies, increasing the demand for locally produced goods and services, leading to a virtuous circle of local economic growth.⁸

Social Protection in the Near East and North Africa (NENA): What is the situation?

The situation of NENA countries presents a complex and challenging picture. As indicated earlier, many people are living in poverty in the region. The region continues to have the highest youth unemployment rates in the world.⁹ Moreover, the NENA region is in turmoil and has been facing different crises, from the Arab Springs to the biggest refugee crisis since World War II, and civil war has spread in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Republic of Iraq, Libya and the Republic of Yemen, causing great instability and damage to both human lives and infrastructure. Furthermore, the impacts of climate change are felt in many countries, with significant implications on economic growth, agriculture, employment and migration.

Currently, the NENA region has a diverse landscape in terms of social protection, but, overall, coverage is low, especially in rural areas. For most of the governments of the region, greater social cohesion based on renewed social protection systems, built through national participatory dialogues, seems to be the most adequate and natural answer to the needs of the NENA population. Small-scale family farmers in particular, who make up 70 percent of the poor in the NENA region, given their dependency on natural resources and pre-existing rural poverty conditions, are among the most exposed to the impacts of the difficulties in the region. Renewing the social contracts by strengthening the linkages between social protection and agriculture, represents a unique opportunity for addressing the needs of this specific population and the actual challenges of the agricultural sector in the region.¹⁰

⁶ Affecting a large proportion of population simultaneously (conflicts, natural disasters, economic and social crisis, etc.)

⁷ Impacting individuals, often through life cycle events such as loss of jobs, illness, death, etc.

⁸ Please refer to the evidence generated by the FAO-UNICEF From Protection to Production project, available at: <http://www.fao.org/economic/ptop/home/en/>.

⁹ 28.2 and 30.5 percent, respectively, in 2014 – and rates have continued to worsen since 2012, particularly for young women” (http://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_412797/lang--en/index.htm).

¹⁰ Fifty percent of the food is imported in the NENA region and the agriculture sector faces different challenges related to water scarcity.

What has FAO been doing in social protection?

The year 2016 was important to the efforts of the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa (RNE) to establish the relevance of social protection in the NENA Region. As indicated earlier, countries in the region are increasingly incorporating social protection measures into many of their programmes, and the need to promote the expansion of social protection to rural areas is becoming ever clearer. FAO is already addressing rural development in the region and is now positioned to support social protection as a mechanism which builds sustainable rural development and reduces poverty by protecting against and preventing negative impacts of shocks whilst promoting rural livelihoods.

The Regional Initiative on Small-scale Family Farming works at the core of the NENA challenges and has been essential to positioning FAO RNE within the social protection dialogue in the region. The Initiative touches several aspects in support of small-scale family farming. Its primary aims are to expand social protection coverage to rural areas, increase the productivity of small-scale family farmers, enhance the capacities of rural institutions and train communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. In 2016, the Regional Initiative developed a publication¹¹ that identifies social protection trends and highlights the main areas in which FAO can potentially be engaged. Through its various activities, the Regional Initiative has expanded its country contacts and established the first linkages between rural development and social protection efforts.

In addition, the Regional Initiative became the main focal point for discussions involving social protection within the FAO RNE and among other organizations working in the region. At the end of 2016, through the Initiative, FAO RNE joined the Regional Social Protection Working Group (SPWG), chaired by ILO and the World Bank, and contributed inputs to the regional framework of social protection in the region. FAO is also part of the Regional Partnership for School Meals as well as a regional partnership approach with them to promote Home Grown School Feeding programmes with the World Food Program (WFP). More specifically, the lack of social protection coverage for rural workers and the potential to better link rural development with social protection schemes are two main areas of work in which FAO aims to contribute further.

¹¹ FAO, Social Protection in the Near East and North Africa Region, 2016. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6540e.pdf>

OBJECTIVES OF THE TECHNICAL MEETING

Within this context, FAO RNE decided to organize a technical meeting on “Social Protection: a tool for rural poverty reduction in the Near East”. The two day technical meeting targeted representatives from the ministries of agriculture, social affairs and other relevant national institutions; FAO staff; development partners and regional experts. The aim of this meeting was to highlight the importance of social protection in the region and to share with partners the FAO approach to social protection in the Near East.

More specifically, the objectives of the strategic meeting were to:

- promote social protection as a tool for rural poverty reduction and resilience in the NENA Region;
- explore possibilities to foster linkages between rural development and social protection;
- deepen understanding of the role of FAO and of the respective entry points in social protection agendas at national and regional levels;
- build capacity for evidence-based policymaking that can answer to the urgent need to reduce rural poverty through social protection;
- identify relevant and realistic windows of opportunity to bring about policy, regulatory, programmatic and/or institutional change at national and regional levels.

OPENING OF TECHNICAL MEETING

Maurice Saade, *FAO Lebanon*

Alfredo Impiglia, *FAO Regional Initiative on Small-Scale Family Farming*

Maurice Saade, representing the FAO Lebanon Country Office, welcomed the ten country representatives from the Arab Republic of Egypt (Egypt), the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran, Islamic Republic of), the Republic of Iraq (Iraq), the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Jordan), the Lebanese Republic (Lebanon), the Sultanate of Oman (Oman), the Republic of the Sudan (Sudan), the Syrian Arab Republic (Syrian Arab Republic), the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Republic of Yemen (Yemen); the United Nations' sister agencies (ILO, UNICEF, WFP, ESCWA); the European Union delegation in Beirut and FAO colleagues.

Mr Saade explained why it was important that the meeting was held in Beirut, noting that the rate of rural poverty in Lebanon is rather high. Furthermore, the Syrian crisis is majorly increasing poverty throughout the country since Lebanon is hosting the largest number of refugees in the world per capita. Most of the host communities are located in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods, especially in the Akkar and Bekaa regions.

Alfredo Impiglia, Delivery Manager of the Regional Initiative on Small-Scale Family Farming, then provided a brief introduction to the purpose of the meeting and an overview of rural poverty in the region and its connection with social protection.

The Regional Initiative coordinates the work of FAO in social protection in the region and has been essential to developing the Organization's role in the social protection dialogue, together with the Member Countries. The Regional Initiative organized this meeting to deepen the participants' understanding of social protection as a tool for poverty reduction and to seek out new paths that will foster strong connections between rural development and social protection. Social protection is gaining importance around the world as an effective method for eradicating poverty and reducing food insecurity and inequalities. It is especially important to people living in rural, agricultural areas who are often the last to benefit from the impacts of a country's economic growth.

Indeed, the fundamental battle to achieve sustainable development will be fought in rural areas. This is where extreme poverty and hunger are concentrated and where populations mostly commonly fall outside the bounds of social protection coverage. Therefore, renewing social contracts by strengthening the connections between social protection and agriculture presents a unique opportunity to support these most vulnerable people.

Furthermore, ensuring better productive and social inclusion of the rural poor, who are dependent on agriculture, is essential in a context of climate change¹² and of economic and social pressures. Building such inclusion represents a strong response to the objective of preserving and restoring social peace and equity in the NENA region. Thus, supporting small-scale family farmers can help to respond to those numerous challenges and increase agricultural productivity in an inclusive and sustainable manner. However, the specific needs of small-scale family farmers must be considered through the development of wider social protection strategies and policies. For those reasons, expanding the coverage of social protection schemes to rural areas is necessary, as is implementing or reinforcing risk-informed social protection systems in the NENA region.

The need to further expand social protection to rural areas is becoming ever clearer and there are signs of hope and positive change in this regard. Countries in the region are increasingly incorporating social protection measures into their programmes. Concrete results are being achieved across the social protection spectrum, in the areas of sustainable agricultural practices, nutrition, education, resilience, employment and social insurance. This trend is also generating more demand for results from Member States that recognize the importance of agriculture in sustainable socioeconomic development.

This is a crucial time for social protection interventions and FAO is positioned to support the governments of the NENA region in developing appropriate and effective mechanisms that promote sustainable rural development and rural livelihoods. This commitment stems directly from the FAO mandate, outlined in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, namely to (1) End Poverty and (2) Achieve Zero Hunger.

In this context, the Regional Initiative focuses on several aspects in support of small-scale family farming. It aims to expand social protection coverage to rural areas, increase the productivity of small-scale family farmers, enhance the capacities of rural institutions and train communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. In 2016, the Regional Initiative developed a regional publication that identifies social protection trends and highlights the main areas in which FAO can potentially be involved.

It is necessary that all actors come together as one to plan, manage and deliver shared results. This meeting presents a great opportunity to reinforce the momentum for social protection in the region and to strengthen important partnerships.

¹² The impacts of climate change are likely to be most severe in regions such as the Near East and North Africa.

SETTING THE SCENE

Alfredo Impiglia, Delivery Manager for the Regional Initiative, opened the workshop and set the scene regarding social protection in the NENA region. He presented recent developments and challenges regarding social protection, followed by an overview of the strategy of FAO on poverty reduction, with particular attention to the Organization's work and strategy in social protection.

Challenges and developments for social protection in the region

Rana Jawad, *University of Bath*

The first session of the meeting centred on the challenges and recent developments in social protection in the NENA region. Rana Jawad, Senior Lecturer on Social Policy at the University of Bath, began by providing an overview of social protection trends in the NENA region and associated challenges, from a political and institutional view.

Social policies and protection are defined as follows:

- **Social policy:** Interventions in the public sphere (encompassing all forms of social security and human rights legislation, regulations and guidelines for public and private programmes and services) designed to enhance social and individual well-being. It is possible to speak of social policy in both 'narrow' and 'broad' terms, depending on how much importance is placed on addressing social inequalities and the choice that is given to individuals and markets to provide the essential services required for living a decent life with dignity.
- **Social protection:** A government-wide policy implemented through a set of intersectoral programmes which respond to the economic, social, political and security risks that poor and vulnerable people face and which will make them more secure and more able to participate economically and socially in society.

Three main policy orientations used in this context are: (1) social risk management, (2) social justice and social contracts and (3) institutionalized social policies. The concept of social protection itself is in crisis. Indeed, the idea of social protection and its practical application are being challenged and any definition, therefore, is in flux.

As part of the developing notion of social protection, universalist and redistributive social policies are needed. Countries need to institutionalise approaches that affirm the role of collective provision, social rights and redistribution in social protection. As such, it will be essential to create a political and institutional structure that can instigate and maintain such

policies. Social protection needs to be seen as much more than a service delivery sector. In fact, the most progressive social protection interventions are underpinned by enforceable legislation which transforms a charitable gesture into a justifiable right.

A number of conditions are necessary to enable successful social policies and protection. First among these is the need to have a state that creates economic opportunities and a society that is empowered to claim its rights. In addition, relevant governance structures need to be in place and rule of law and the concept of common good must be established.

State and civil society benevolence has reinforced communal divisions and urban bias in social protection systems. Safety nets and cash transfer schemes have had limited impact. Therefore, developing employment guarantee, child benefit and basic income schemes is extremely relevant.

FAO strategy on rural poverty reduction

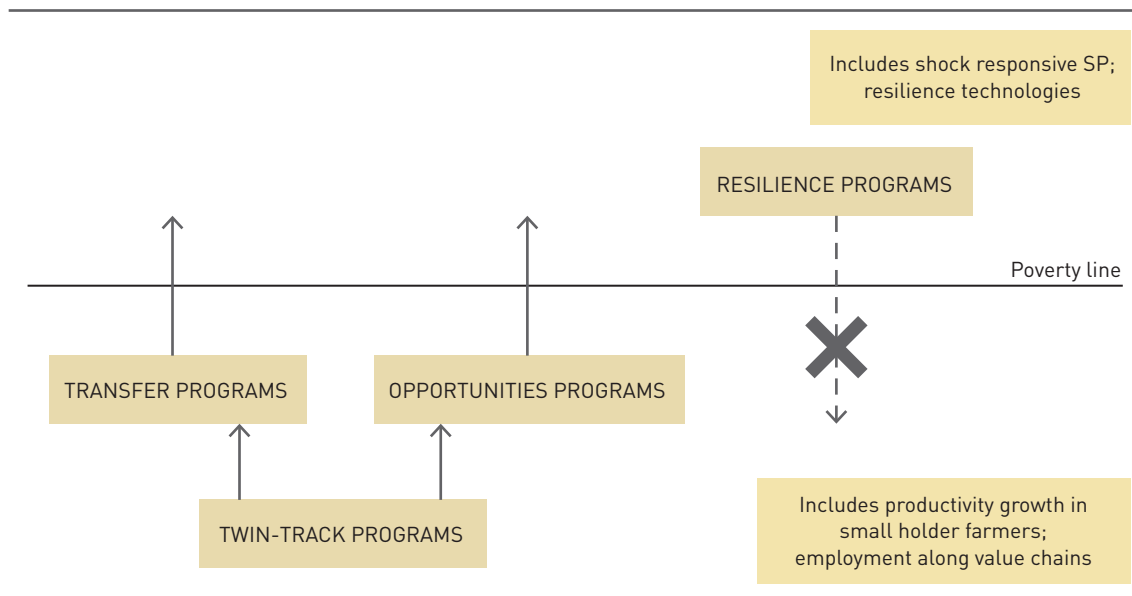
Maya Takagi, *FAO*

Maya Takagi introduced the FAO approach to reducing rural poverty from a global perspective. The FAO programme on rural poverty reduction strategically links the first and second Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG1, which focuses on eradicating extreme poverty and reducing the share of the world's population in poverty by 50 percent by 2030, and SDG2, which focuses on ending hunger and ensuring access to nutritious and sufficient food, particularly by helping double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale producers. The achievement of these goals will depend strongly on agriculture in the medium term.

The conceptual framework for poverty reduction programmes consists of four entry points for poverty reduction (Figure 1). The first of these is resilience programmes, which reduce the vulnerability of the non-poor through contributory programmes. Progress has been made on these programmes with index insurance, incentives to precautionary savings, emergency loans and resilient technology. Key mechanisms for preventing vulnerable groups from falling into poverty need to include contributory and non-contributory insurance programmes and social safety nets to ensure that these groups do not fall back into poverty.

The second entry point, for which there is still a role, is transfer programmes, such as food transfers, school feeding programmes and right-to-food approaches. The third entry point, which needs to be considered, is opportunity programmes that provide income options for poor people. Fourth, a series of twin-track programmes also act as effective entry points. Finally, the creation of empowerment programmes that correspond to the new political economy equilibrium of the country offer potential solutions.

FAO plays a key role in supporting actors in the implementation of such entry point programmes with its ability to act as a strategic thinker and coordinator amongst various counterparts. Finally, FAO also plays an important role in forming and maintaining partnerships, especially with an understanding of different approaches and systems.

Figure 1. **Four entry points for poverty reduction programmes**

FAO strategy on social protection

Natalia Winder Rossi, FAO

Natalia Winder provided a strategic and global overview of social protection and the particular role of FAO within it. There are three thematic pillars of social protection: agriculture, nutrition and resilience (Figure 2). Through these pillars, FAO is able to add value to the social protection efforts by providing the economic case for scaling up activities, by expanding coverage to rural areas and by facilitating a transition from protection to production.

As to the role of social protection, at the very minimum, social protection can be used as a risk management strategy to reduce negative coping mechanisms. It can also be used as a poverty reduction strategy that would contribute to all four dimensions of food security. This can be achieved, in part, by reducing economic barriers to accessing essential services and addressing the social and economic determinants of malnutrition. Furthermore, social protection is effective as a strategy for inclusive growth. It strengthens the capacity of households to cope with, manage and withstand shocks and natural and man-made disasters. In addition to generating positive social impacts, social protection also enhances the economic and productive capacity of even the poorest of the poor and empowers the most marginalized.

The FAO approach to social protection in the NENA region primarily focuses on the provision of various forms of support. First, FAO is able to support the expansion and the effective reach of coverage to rural populations, particularly in terms of social assistance, social security and access to decent work. Second, FAO can support an approach to social protection that

can address key regional priorities such as impacts of displacement on host communities, enhancing the resilience of poor small-scale farmers and creating income-generating opportunities for youth.

FAO is also well positioned to provide an assessment of regional trends in social protection *vis-à-vis* rural development. FAO can also promote country coordination and participation in working groups as well as positive interlinkages with rural development within ministries of agriculture in the region.

Figure 2. **FAO thematic priorities**



Discussion

Following these introductory presentations, discussions centred on the implications of the potential solutions raised. Ms Jawad emphasized the need for fiscal modifications to more effectively allocate resources. She elaborated on the role of fuel subsidy reform, which is an easy target for improving the use of public funds. She also noted that this is not an all-encompassing solution, but it should be considered. Ms Takagi noted the importance of thinking expansively about social protection, pointing out that rural and urban areas are connected and therefore should not be treated in isolation. As such, migration should be seen as a useful instrument to enhance rural development through economic, financial and social remittances that can help improve human development in the households of origin.

POLICY REVIEW AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES

The second session of the first part of the technical meeting focused on policy review and the national priorities within social protection. Typologies of social protection interventions in the agricultural context were presented as well as lessons learned from three key countries within the region: Egypt, Jordan and Iran (Islamic Republic of).

Combining agricultural and social protection interventions

Fabio Veras Soares, *International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)*

There are different typologies of social protection interventions in the agricultural context. The first is Sustainable Livelihood Programmes (SLP), which are single programmes with multiple components, including both agricultural and social protection interventions. The second is Complementary Programmes (CP) that involve two sectors and are designed and/or implemented in a partially coordinated and/or aligned manner. Third, Overlapping Programmes (OP) involve programmes from both agricultural and social protection sectors without alignment or coordination for which beneficiaries will overlap somewhat at the individual/household and/or geographical/community level only in an unplanned manner.

The methods used in combined programmes provide positive results, including investment in productive assets, savings, access to formal credit and the diversification of income sources towards more stable, profitable and productive resources. Such programs have also led to a noted shift towards self-employment and decent employment, increased food security and reduced poverty. Despite these positive results, there were also a series of mixed outcomes from such interventions that should be taken into account. With specific regard to the NENA region, there are examples of evaluations of social protection and agriculture in Morocco and Egypt.

Learnings from the Republic of Egypt

Ahmed Loutaief, *Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity*

Following Mr Veras' presentation, a few of the countries shared their experiences in implementing social protection measures. The Egyptian Ministry of Social Solidarity shared their experiences, which included the provision of health care, food cards for school, housing loans and salary support. Significant progress has been made through these initiatives and the extension of social protection for poor families was emphasized.

One of the challenges that Egypt has experienced is the overlap of certain social protection schemes. In response, the Ministry of Planning issues poverty maps that are used to target policies effectively. Egypt has now implemented special mechanisms to ensure the verifiability of claims so that social protection measures are enforced in an equitable manner.

A particularly notable development in Egypt is the reform of energy subsidies. The funds freed up as result of the reduction of the subsidy have been redirected towards social programmes, increasing the budget for such programmes by 18 percent.

Learnings from the Islamic Republic of Iran

Ahmad Meidari, *Ministry of Cooperatives*

Iran (Islamic Republic of) has a series of social protection programmes, mostly implemented in association with the Imam Khomeini Fund and/or the government. Three major programmes that are being implemented focus on health insurance, social pensions and social assistance in weather prediction.

While Iran (Islamic Republic of) is working to maintain such programmes, Mr Meidari also emphasized that their cash transfer programmes need to be cut, especially following the drop in the global oil price. In lieu of those programmes, there are efforts focused on the provision of microfinance.

Similar to Egypt, there is a challenge of overlap between various programmes. The country has developed a poverty map, which also identifies persons excluded from social protection systems such as children not in school, the elderly and women.

Learnings from Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Omar Alrabtah, *Ministry of Social Development*

A large portion of Jordan's work is designed to protect it against the impacts of international trade while also promoting the Jordanian labour force abroad. Noteworthy is the importance of small institutions in fighting poverty in Jordan. For instance, a national bank for small loans was established amidst recent efforts to address poverty reduction.

The essential role of religious organizations (primarily Islamic and Christian) is to provide training and support for people. The government is supporting their efforts by also enhancing vocational training. In addition to this community-based support, the government is working to institutionalize corporate social responsibility in the private sector.

Discussion

Given that all of the countries pointed to the challenges they have in terms of monitoring who receives support, most of the discussion focused on data collection systems. One of the crosscutting challenges identified is that governments are not always eager to have data published. Therefore, accessing the data and, consequently, developing effective plans can be a major challenge.

EXPANDING SOCIAL PROTECTION TO RURAL AREAS

The third part of the first day of the technical meeting focused on the possible paths to extend social protection coverage to rural areas. The experience of FAO in Lebanon was presented first, followed by the topic of how the expansion of social protection, with particular attention to health coverage, applies to rural areas.

Experiences from the Lebanese Republic

Maurice Saadé, Ariance Genthon and Faten Adada, FAO

FAO team members presented the case of extending social protection to rural areas in Lebanon, beginning with the context for poverty reduction in the country and examining the prevalence of poverty in rural areas.

Lebanese rural populations have experienced an unequal share of poverty and underdevelopment for a prolonged period of time. This has mostly been the case in Akkar, Bekka and south Lebanon, with the poverty rate being highest in the agricultural sector. In response to these challenges, different social policies have been developed, including the Social Action Plan that formed the basis for the National Social Development Strategy and the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP). At the subnational level, rural development goals have been included in the Ministry of Agriculture's Strategy for 2015-2019 and the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan that aims to mitigate the impacts of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon. Other government institutions, such as the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Higher Relief Council, are also providing assistance and social security services. Finally, a series of non-governmental organizations, such as the World Food Programme and the Lebanese Food Bank, are providing food assistance.

Given the increase of Syrian refugee children in the country and the prevalence of child labour, the role of social protection against child labour is of growing relevance. In this context, it is important to note that not all participation by children in agriculture is defined as child labour. Child labour is work that is inappropriate for a child's age, that affects children's education, or that is likely to harm their health, safety or morals.

The root causes of child labour in agriculture are related to the complex interrelation of poverty, employment, education and underlying cultural factors. The expansion of social

protection to address child labour in agriculture can be achieved by striving towards the formalization of employment, the provision of minimum employment and health related benefits, and the building of health protection principles in agriculture. FAO has been supporting the Ministry of Labour in the implementation of the National Action Plan to combat the worst forms of child labour in agriculture by raising awareness regarding occupational safety and health in agriculture, in collaboration with ILO and UNICEF.

In conclusion, there is a great need to expand social protection coverage to rural areas. There is also a need to relieve host communities and poor rural households of the burdens placed on them by the influx of refugees.

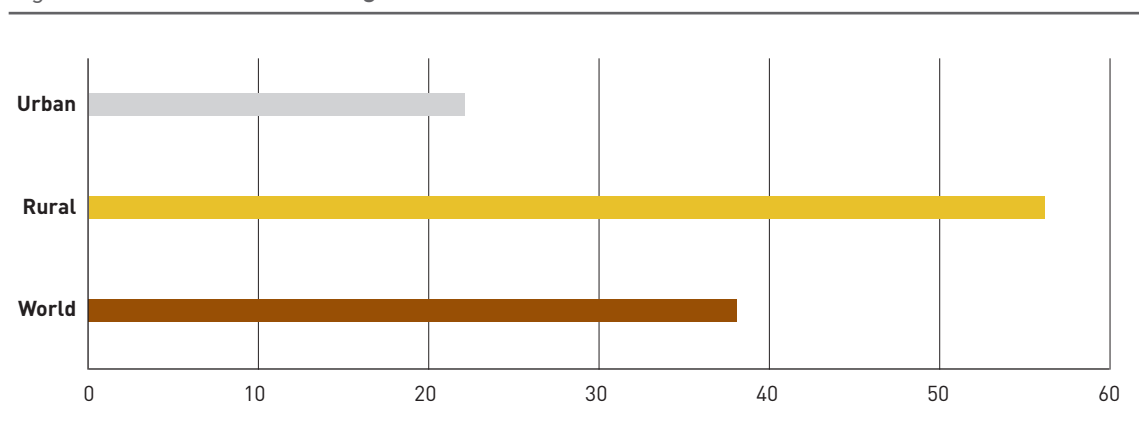
Strong efforts are being made to explore opportunities to extend social security benefits to rural areas with an emphasis on health, old age pension and crop insurance by supporting the Ministry of Agriculture in creating a farmer registry and in reviewing the legal framework of the labour law and the National Social Development Strategy.

Expansion of universal health to rural areas

Ursula Kulke, *International Labour Organization (ILO)*

Ms Kulke began by making the connection between universal health and the provision of a social protection floor (Figure 3). National social protection floors (SPFs) guarantee access to essential health care and basic income security for children, persons of working age, and older persons. One hundred eighty five (185) countries have adopted the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation as a way to achieve universal social protection. In April 2009, the UN Chief Executives Board (UN CEB) agreed on nine joint initiatives to confront the lack of social support, among them the Social Protection Floor Initiative. In 2011, at the Cannes Summit, the G20 endorsed the establishment of social protection floors and committed to making gradual progress towards their implementation. Subsequently, in

Figure 3. **Social health coverage in rural areas**



Source: ILO estimates, 2015

2012, the ILO adopted the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012, No. 202, which provides guidance to countries in setting up national social protection floors and extending social security to higher levels of benefits.

With this context, determining financing mechanisms for social protection is an important issue. There is no single correct financial model for providing social health protection or for achieving universal coverage. Countries use various means of resource generation, risk pooling, health care delivery and financing to create dynamic systems. The most realistic approach to achieve universal coverage is to coordinate and rationalize the use of pluralistic financing mechanisms. A combination of national health services, social health insurance, community-based insurance and mandated private health insurance can achieve effective social health protection coverage that takes into consideration existing coverage and financing arrangements and can be adjusted to the socio-economic context of each country. Social dialogue should be the basis of decisions on key aspects of social health protection.

There were positive and negative repercussions associated with each of these mechanisms. There have been experiences in Thailand and Jordan that illustrate how social protection in the context of health can be implemented.

FINANCING SOCIAL PROTECTION

Analysing the means to finance social protection programmes, from domestic resource mobilization to blended options used by international donors, was an important point discussed during the technical meeting.

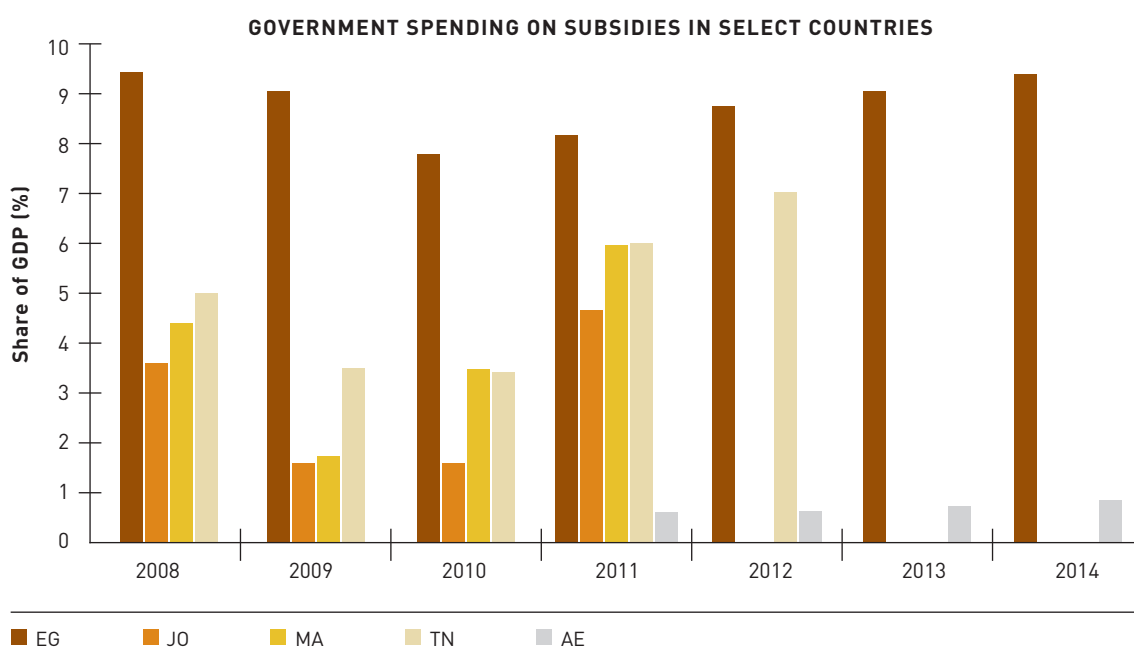
Financing social protection

Gisela Nauk, *United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)*

As a natural continuation of Ms Kulke's presentation, Ms Nauk introduced the various options for effectively financing social protection. She compared government spending on subsidies throughout the region, noting that Egypt's spending on subsidies was significantly higher than that of other countries (Figure 4).

Government spending on social benefits varies across the region. However, overall, there has been an increase in spending over time, except in Yemen where allocated funding has fluctuated, especially between 2007 and 2009.

Figure 4. **Financing social protection**



Financing social protection

Ursula Kulke, ILO

Ms Kulke presented an overview of different sources of financing for social protection around the world then elaborated on how to create or increase fiscal spaces for those type of expenditures, even in the poorest of countries. This can be achieved through a variety of mechanisms; for instance, by adapting insurance coverage for self-financed contributory benefits for those who can afford social protection.

Public expenditures for subsidies can also be reallocated to more targeted programmes, and taxation systems can be altered to improve their effectiveness. Governments should also be encouraged to restructure their debt and redirect investments towards social protection to ensure economic and fiscal returns. Countries can also increase their central budget by improving their tax collection in order to support national priorities regarding the expansion of social protection coverage and poverty reduction.

A useful case study for exploring further options is that of Jordan. The Government of Jordan has reallocated public expenditures for better-targeted transfers and has simultaneously increased central taxation revenues. The government is also able to mobilize fiscal and foreign exchange reserves and explore how they might restructure their debt to incentivize investment in social protection mechanisms.

Discussion

The discussion that ensued focused on the connections between agriculture and social protection. It was emphasized that, historically, all support to agriculture was intended as social protection, even though it was not labelled as such, and was designed to support farmers to prevent them from migrating. The role of specific support to small-scale family farmers was stressed in this context. There was also much interest in the role of data collection and in using registries. Methods for this are being developed and applied in different countries.

SOCIAL PROTECTION, RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

This session covered how social protection is related to resilience and climate change. It introduced the different approaches to emergency response, considering national social protection systems, and how to integrate rapid response activities into broader, longer-term development strategies.

Resilience and social protection

Étienne du Vachat, *FAO HQ (TCE)*

Mr du Vachat introduced the concept of using social protection to build resilience, focusing particularly on protracted crises and humanitarian and fragile contexts.

FAO focuses primarily on building the resilience of livelihoods to natural hazards and disasters, food chain crises and protracted crises. Building resilience to such crises is especially important considering that 93 percent of people living in extreme poverty are in fragile and/or environmentally vulnerable contexts.

In its approach to the resilience and social protection nexus, FAO seeks to strengthen the productive and resilience impacts of social protection programmes through complementary interventions. FAO also supports the development of risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems that can bridge environmental, rural and livelihood divides. Further, FAO is also exploring and contributing to building nascent social protection systems in extreme fragile/complex contexts. FAO also acknowledges the importance of reliable data and evidence generation and, in so doing, applies its social protection analytical and impact evaluation capacity.

The FAO approach to resilience is based on four pillars. First, countries and regions need to adopt and implement legal, policy and institutional systems and regulatory frameworks for risk reduction and crisis management as one of the pillars in the design of risk-informed, flexible national social protection policies and programmes. The response capacities of existing national structures, such as ministries of agriculture and ministries of social affairs, also need to be strengthened.

The second pillar of resilience building is that countries and regions must provide regular and early information to prevent any potential, known and emerging threats. This could be achieved through the collection of food security and nutrition, environmental, conflict and livelihoods data, which would inform the management and targeting mechanisms of social protection systems. In order to do this, it is essential that national registries be developed and regularly maintained. Given the challenges presented in the national case studies above, this is particularly pertinent to the NENA region. Finally, designing trigger mechanisms for shock-responsiveness is also important at this stage, especially for predictable hazards.

The third pillar is that countries and regions must reduce risks and vulnerability at household and community levels. One key method for doing so is through cash-based transfers, including, for instance, cash-for-work for sustainable land and water management (agro-forestry activities, land rehabilitation, water harvesting, etc.). FAO works on a series of cash transfer mechanisms, including voucher schemes, input trade fairs for agricultural inputs and services, unconditional and conditional cash transfers and “Cash+” schemes.

The fourth pillar is that countries and regions affected by disasters and crises must be well-prepared and carry out effective response. Generally, such responses include emergency cash-based transfer programmes to save livelihoods and protect assets, implemented through the scale-up of existing social protection systems, when available. The role of communities is also essential. That is the reason why the different stakeholders should also strengthen the response capacities of local entities and communities, who are often the first providers of response in emergencies.

Linking rapid response and long-term development through social protection systems

Muriel Calo, *World Food Programme (WFP)*

Ms Calo commenced by highlighting the challenges that face the NENA region, including protracted conflicts, violence and massive displacements as well as economic stagnation and income inequality. These factors have had destabilizing effects on food security and nutrition within the region and have drawn attention to the NENA region’s high dependence on food imports and to the relatively low contribution of agriculture to gross domestic product (GDP). The NENA region is, indeed, the only region in the world where malnutrition rates have risen since 2000.

In response to these challenges, there are a series of formal social protection mechanisms already in place in the NENA region. Of these, governments in the NENA region tend to favour consumer food price subsidies. However, these are considered expensive and inefficient since the benefits are captured disproportionately by the non-poor. As such, subsidies are being phased out, but with the direct consequence of a rise in food prices that threatens the poor unless compensatory measures are introduced.

In addition to these subsidies, social transfers, such as targeted cash, food or voucher allocation, have been used. However, these have had only a limited impact on poverty and inequality in the NENA region due to the low coverage, low benefits, inefficient targeting and inadequate monitoring and evaluation of their implementation.

School feeding programmes are also used in some parts of the NENA region. These aim to improve nutrition and education and to reduce child labour and gender inequity by providing fortified foods in school meals, and through food-for-education (or cash for education) programs and local purchases for ‘home-grown school feeding’ to stimulate national agricultural production.

A further mechanism is the use of public works projects, which can reduce seasonal food insecurity and stabilise income and consumption after rapid onset shocks. Public works can also contribute to building resilience and adaptation to climate change by selecting community assets that promote better use of natural resources and reduce the impact of disasters.

The WFP’s nutrition programmes are another type of safety net in the region that include blanket or targeted interventions for treating chronic and acute undernutrition by providing vitamin A and iron supplementation, salt iodisation, and fortified and specialised foods.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has implemented several social protection programs. One is the Palestinian National Cash Transfers Programme (CTP), established in 2010 by merging two large safety net programmes, the *Social Safety Net Reform Project* and the *Special Hardship Case* programme. Accounting for about one percent of GDP, the CTP provides quarterly cash payments to vulnerable households. Further to this, WFP has also invested significant efforts in building the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Social Development to introduce, manage and scale-up the use of vouchers within the CTP.

The WFP has developed an e-voucher scheme that has proven to be an effective infrastructure for enhancing the capacity of humanitarian actors to deliver social assistance in times of crisis. The e-voucher scheme has demonstrated how a national safety net can be designed to be scalable during shocks and emergencies. The voucher programme is already an integral part of the National Social Safety Net (covering up to 23,000 households, with further expansion planned as of 2017).

Leveraging partnerships for child-sensitive social protection

Violet Warnery, *United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)*

UNICEF supports national child-sensitive social protection systems. This was a particularly relevant topic in the context of previous discussions on the important role of child labour in agriculture. Ms Warnery presented a series of recommendations for maximizing such partnerships in social protection.

The primary recommendation is to use a government-led inclusive and consultative approach. This involves establishing an inter-ministerial and agency social protection committee to provide analysis on multi-dimensional (child) poverty and support in the implementation of a national social protection system, along a life-cycle approach. The committee should also coordinate the development of integrated social protection policies and legislation, implemented through a budgeted action plan.

There are a number of examples of social protection partnerships being maximized to catalyse a humanitarian response. For instance, in the wake of the Nepal earthquake, unconditional cash transfers were delivered to households in the earthquake-affected areas using an existing social assistance scheme. An emergency cash transfer model for future emergencies is now being developed based on existing social assistance mechanisms. A second example is drawn from Lebanon where the government is establishing a humanitarian safety net system of cash-based programmes that address the multiple vulnerabilities of Syrian refugee families, including unemployment, education, health and protection.

Climate-smart social protection

Cecilia Costella, *Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre*

Ms Costella began by emphasizing the relevance and importance of climate-smart social protection, as, every year, over 300 different, larger and less predictable natural disasters are reported from around the world. Climate change is generally the cause of this evolution and could force more than 100 million people into extreme poverty by 2030.

While climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts are expanding, their goals are not being achieved fast enough. Consequently, we are now bound to experience more frequent and severe climate events. The poorest and vulnerable are the ones who will suffer the impacts the most. In fact, least economically developed countries (LDCs) are particularly vulnerable to climate extremes: they are highly exposed to climate change geographically and many sectors (such as agriculture) are highly sensitive to climate variability. The poorest and most marginalized within LDCs will be impacted hardest by climate change variability and climate shocks and they have limited capacity to respond to the risks climate change poses. To deal with this future situation, we must think of different and long-term solutions.

Climate risks are naturally linked to long-term development and growth. Dealing with risk requires established and sustainable mechanisms that support both humanitarian action against long-term poverty and long-term vulnerability reduction. The post-2015 agenda (which followed the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – the UNFCCC) acknowledges the challenges of climate change for poor and vulnerable populations through four separate, but interrelated, global processes: The Sustainable Development Goals (2015), the World Humanitarian Summit (2016), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015) and the UNFCCC Paris Agreement (2015).

These conferences have underlined the great need for an integrated approach to address vulnerability to climate change. Efforts to reduce poverty should help reduce vulnerability to climate change. Social protection has much to offer in helping the poorest people reduce their exposure to current and future climate shocks, as it can help to support livelihoods and protect the poor and excluded from such shocks. Climate-smart social protection emphasizes transforming productive livelihoods as well as protecting them from and adapting them to changing climate conditions, rather than reinforcing coping strategies and mechanisms. This connects with the risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection strategy of the FAO, which aims to enhance the resilience of agricultural livelihoods.

Social protection can help to manage climate risks by anticipating, absorbing and adapting to climate shocks. Anticipatory capacity is the ability of social systems to anticipate and reduce the impact of climate variability and extremes through preparedness and planning. It refers to the ability to take proactive action before the shock has materialized to reduce exposure or vulnerability. For instance, disaster preparedness plans can increase anticipatory capacity. Forecast-based financing (FbF) mechanisms that enable automatic action before shocks happen can do the same. FbF is of interest to many stakeholders and is being trialed in a number of locations, including Bangladesh.

Absorptive capacity refers to the ability of a system to manage adverse conditions or shocks after they occur. For example, a community that can respond to the needs of the most vulnerable through safe emergency evacuation without outside assistance is considered to have a high capacity to absorb such shocks.

Finally, adaptive capacity is the ability of the system to learn and adapt to current climate risks and to have in-built flexibility to manage the unknown. For instance, measures such as soil conservation and sustainable irrigation can increase food security and productivity, helping a household manage unexpected shocks and stresses more effectively in the long term.

Discussion

Much of the discussion that followed these presentations focused on the impact of climate change in the region. Delegates from Iran (Islamic Republic of) pointed out the impact the dust storms coming over the border from Iraq (due to redirection of rivers caused by Turkish dams) were already having in their country. In this context, building forecasting capacity was stressed. The longer the warning time, the more likely the success of the intervention. Sudan also noted their many experiences in building resilience to climate change. Their concerns focused on the impacts that droughts would have on agriculture.

While social protection was highlighted as a method for responding to shocks, it was also noted that this alone is insufficient for addressing climate change. Long-term transformational capacity should be built along with the ability to effectively manage risks. As an example of this kind of capacity, one suggestion was to develop a regular fund transfer from governments to those affected by natural disasters. Another suggestion was to invest in secure land tenure rights to encourage better land management practices. It was pointed out the Regional Initiative on Small-Scale Family Farming is developing some work on this topic.

FROM PROTECTION TO PRODUCTION: EVIDENCE-BASED SOCIAL PROTECTION

From Protection to Production is a project that gathered great evidence from social protection programmes in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time, ESCWA-led studies demonstrated the existence of social protection programmes already underway in the NENA Region. Both evidences were presented and discussed.

From evidence to action: FAO/UNICEF joint initiative on impact evaluation of national cash transfer programmes

Natalia Winder Rossi, *FAO*

Ms Rossi shared evidence on social cash transfers from across sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). There are a series of government-run programmes in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These programmes led to a broad range of social and productive impacts on poor families. Impact evaluations were conducted, which help to inform broader social protection policy and programming processes in each country.

Thirteen rigorous large-scale impact evaluations were conducted throughout these countries. Because of this, SSA is now a global leader in the production of evidence and regional learning on cash transfers.

The method used included three main components: statistical/quantitative impact evaluations, qualitative methods (such as comparative cross-country case studies, longitudinal studies, and applying a thematic focus) and local economy-wide impact evaluations. The method followed by each country responded to the needs, the programme context and the budget considerations of each country.

All countries have control group baseline household surveys and sometimes two to three follow-up household and community surveys. By linking the different methods, FAO and UNICEF were able to produce a common story of what was happening in these countries and why.

Some of the benefits of cash transfer approaches have increased household welfare; increased investment in children's future; enhanced economic and productive potential, even among poorest and most vulnerable and positively impacted the local community.

Cash transfers in the Arab region

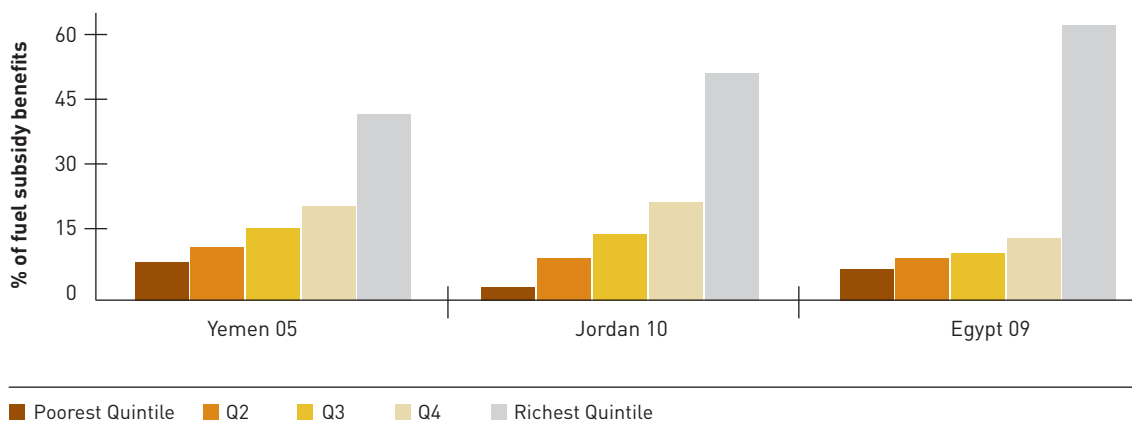
Gisela Nauk, ESCWA

Ms. Nauk presented the situation of cash transfers in the Arab region. The labour market in the Arab region is characteristically informal. It is estimated that only around one-third of workers in the Arab region are formally employed. Participants in the formal economy are covered by social insurance while informal workers and their dependents rely instead on social assistance. However, it has become increasingly clear that existing forms of social assistance, particularly universal subsidies, are not fulfilling their objectives (Figure 5). In fact, there is a general sentiment that universal energy subsidies have a regressive impact. This impact is particularly notable in Egypt, where subsidies have a long and entrenched history.

While the informal labour market depends on social assistance, this cannot be provided effectively to poor people unless the government knows who the poor are, how they can be reached and what their needs are. Population registries are often incomplete and farmers' registries not developed and it is the poor who are most likely to be missing from them. Therefore, the importance of accurate data collection and monitoring cannot be understated.

The lack of financial infrastructure and appropriate substitutes, especially in rural areas, often makes it difficult to channel resources to the poor. Institutional responsibility varies according to the scope and goals of each cash transfer programme. The presence of multiple actors creates coordination challenges for the implementation and management of such programmes. As such, it is important not to administratively overburden the programmes. In fact, effectiveness often depends on a projects' ability to reach intended beneficiaries and access adequate public services and collect payments. Therefore, considering the need for coordination, cash programmes need to be combined with parallel interventions and investments in social services and be fully integrated into and coordinated with the broader social policy framework.

Figure 5. **Universal subsidies**



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Regional Initiative on Small-Scale Family Farming (SSFF) has planned the next steps for the development and facilitation of an e-learning course on social protection as a tool for rural poverty reduction. Alfredo Impiglia explained that the purpose of the course is to further the training begun during this technical meeting. Accordingly, the course will promote social protection as a tool for rural poverty reduction and resilience in the NENA Region and explore possibilities to foster linkages between rural development and social protection. The intention is to deepen understanding on the particular role of FAO and respective entry points in social protection agendas at national and regional levels. In so doing, the course aims to build capacity for evidence-based policymaking that can attend to the urgent needs to reduce rural poverty through social protection and identify relevant and realistic windows of opportunity to bring about policy, regulatory, programmatic and/or institutional change at national and regional levels.

In the final round of discussion, many of the member countries raised topics of importance to their governments. Notably, the challenge of socioeconomic stability in the region was stressed, particularly in the context of Islamic State. The delegation from Syrian Arab Republic naturally emphasised the impact that this has had on their social protection programmes. Most of these programmes have been diminished or curtailed following the conflicts in Syrian Arab Republic.

Furthermore, there was a consensus that the meeting presented new ideas and concepts about the importance of social development and inclusion. One of the academics noted that it is not so much the protection aspect that is new to the region, but rather the social aspect of “social protection”.

A delegate from the European Union (EU), a major stakeholder and funder in the region, emphasised that it needs to be made clear to policy-makers why they should be interested in this topic. There is a strong focus on ensuring stability in this region and therefore it needs to be demonstrated why inequalities are dangerous and, thus, why focusing on creating inclusive and equal societies is better for everyone. Providing social safety nets that protect people from socioeconomic volatility is essential, as was demonstrated by the different impacts of the 2008-2009 financial crisis on the EU versus the United States of America.

Another point made was the importance of ensuring multi-sectoral collaboration in order to achieve these ends. Collaboration between the ministries of agriculture and social services must be strong. It is therefore important to ensure that agriculture ministries are convinced of the value of social policies. In addition to this collaboration, ensuring sustainable finance for social protection must be addressed, as there are no consistent funding sources that ensure the continuity of interventions.

Some delegates expressed the wish to further understand the role of small-scale family farmers in the context of social protection. This was considered particularly important, as some of them have had experiences where only larger farms had benefitted from interventions.

In this regard, Alfredo Impiglia shared an overview of the work of the Regional Initiative on Small-Scale Family Farming. It was noted that the Regional Initiative provides support to enhance the productivity of small-scale farmers in a sustainable manner as well as supporting the producer organisations and facilitating their access to value chains that enable them to be profitable. In this context, there are many entry points for social protection programmes.

Finally, in addition to learning from regional counterparts, the importance of each government developing an action plan that will allow it to incorporate social protection policies into its work plans was stressed. This recommendation can be enacted with the support of the FAO Regional Initiative on Small-Scale Family Farming, which is already engaging bilaterally with countries to determine how best to support them in the transition to more equitable and inclusive social protection mechanisms. These bilateral discussions, together with the roll-out of the e-learning training, are the first concrete steps towards ensuring the continuity of effective action to promote social protection as a tool for poverty reduction in the NENA region.

Major takeaways from the meeting

- There is an important gap to be filled in including the ministries of agriculture into comprehensive social protection policies and programmes.
- FAO has the capability to promote climate-smart agriculture linked to existing social protection systems.
- The Regional Social Protection Working Group (SPWG) is an excellent platform for more coordinated stakeholder engagement in social protection in the NENA countries.
- FAO works mainly promoting the expansion of social protection coverage (social insurance, social security, social assistance and social health) to rural areas and farm/rural workers.
- FAO wishes to complement country/UN-led programmes with initiatives that can increase the productivity and capacity of beneficiaries.
- FAO mainstreams gender-sensitive and nutrition-sensitive approaches to social protection systems.

APPENDIX 1

AGENDA

Time	Session 1 (facilitated by Mr. Alfredo Impiglia, FAO)
DAY 1 - March 29 th	9:00 - 9:30 Opening of the technical meeting - Addresses by: <i>Mr Maurice Saade</i> , FAO Representative Lebanon <i>Mr Alfredo Impiglia</i> , Regional Delivery Manager SSFF, FAO RNE Adoption of the Agenda Presentation of the Participants <i>Welcoming remarks, presentation of workshop's objectives and agenda</i>
	9:30 - 11:00 Setting the Scene: Challenges and recent developments in the NENA region – by: <i>Ms Rania Jawad</i> , Senior Lecturer on Social Policy, University of Bath, UK <i>Provide an overview of Social Protection in the NENA Region and its challenges from a political and institution point of view.</i> <i>Ms Maya Takagi</i> , Deputy Strategic Programme Leader, SP3 - FAO HQ <i>Presentation of FAO's strategy for Reduction of Rural poverty as a corporate priority.</i> <i>Ms Natalia Winder Rossi</i> , Social protection Global Team Leader - FAO HQ <i>Provide an overview of FAO's work in Social Protection and discuss FAO's niche – promoting linkages between SP, Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security and resilience</i> Q/A
	11:00 - 11:30 Coffee Break
	11:30 - 13:00 Policy Review: Revisiting national priorities in Social Protection – by: <i>Mr Fabio Veras</i> , Senior Researcher, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) <i>Mr Ahmed Loutaief</i> , Ministry of Social Solidarity, Egypt <i>Mr Omar Alrabtah</i> , Ministry of Social Development, Jordan <i>Regional and country-level review of Social Protection frameworks.</i>
	13:00 - 14:00 Lunch Break
	14:00 - 15:30 Expanding the coverage of Social Protection to rural areas – FAO experience in Lebanon – by: <i>Mr Maurice Saade</i> , FAO Representative Lebanon <i>Ms. Faten Adada</i> , National Coordinator on Social Protection and Child Labour in Agriculture – FAO Lebanon <i>Ms Ariane Genthon</i> , Child Labour Expert – FAO HQ <i>Demonstrate from both legal and programmatic points of view how the expansion of SP to rural areas is unfolding in the region.</i> <i>Ms Ursula Kulke</i> , Coordinator for Standards and Legislation, Social Security Department, ILO Lebanon <i>Expansion of Universal Health and how to apply this to the rural areas</i>
	15:30 - 16:00 Coffee break
	16:00 - 16:45 Financing Social Protection – by: <i>Ms Gisela Nauk</i> , Chief of the Social Policy Section in the Social Development Division – ESCWA <i>Ms Ursula Kulke</i> , Coordinator for Standards and Legislation. Social Security Department – ILO Lebanon <i>What are the various means to finance SP programmes: from domestic resource mobilization to blended options used by international donors.</i>
17:00 Closing day 1	

DAY 2 - March 30 th	Time	Session 2 (facilitated by Mr. Alfredo Impiglia, FAO)
	9:15 - 9:45	Recap Day 1
	9:45 - 11:15	<p>Social protection, resilient livelihoods and climate change – by:</p> <p><i>Mr Etienne du Vachat</i>, Senior Resilience Expert – FAO TCE <i>Ms Muriel Calo</i>, Programme Policy Officer Resilience & Livelihoods – WFP RBC <i>Ms Violet Warnery</i>, Chief of Field operations and Social Policy – UNICEF Lebanon <i>Different approaches to emergencies responses considering national Social Protection systems and how to work in a better-integrated approach to rapid responses placed in longer-term development strategies</i></p>
	11:15 - 11:45	Coffee Break
	11:45 - 12:45	<p>Social Protection and Climate Change – by:</p> <p><i>Ms Cecilia Costella</i>, Senior Technical Adviser – Red Cross Climate Change Centre <i>Presentation of climate change resilience initiative and case studies.</i></p> <p>Q/A</p>
	12:45 - 14:00	Lunch
	14:00 - 15:00	<p>From Protection to Production: Evidence based Social Protection – by:</p> <p><i>Ms Natalia Winder-Rossi</i>, Social Protection Global Team Leader – FAO HQ <i>Ms Gisela Nauk</i>, Chief of the Social Policy Section In the Social Development Division – ESCWA <i>FAO's PtoP has gathered evidence from Social Protection programmes in Latin American and Sub-Saharan Africa. ESCWA-led studies show evidence of Social Protection programmes in the NENA region.</i></p>
	15:00 - 16:15	<p>Leveraging partnerships for Social Protection implementation and monitoring – by:</p> <p>UNICEF, ILO, WFP (speakers TBC) <i>Expansion of SP to rural areas is possible through inter agencies partnerships and interministerial collaboration</i></p>
	16:15 - 16:45	Coffee Break
	16:45 - 17:00	<p>E-learning course in Social Protection as a tool for poverty reduction</p> <p><i>Ms Flavia Lorenzon</i>, Social Protection Focal Point - FAO RNE</p>
17:00 - 18:00	<p>A vision for NENA: Recommendations</p> <p>Facilitator and panel of governments <i>Governments to agree in joint recommendations especially considering rural poverty and its negative impacts</i></p> <p>Wrap up and closing FAO</p>	

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

COUNTRIES

The Arab Republic of Egypt				
Institutions	Name	Title	Email	Phone
Ministry of Social Solidarity	Mr Ahmed Lotaief	Operations for Takaful and Karama Programme	alotaief@yahoo.com	+2 01006063055
Agri. Extension and Rural Development Research Institute	Mr Adel Fahmy Mahmoud Elghannam	Director of AERDRI	adelf.elghannam@yahoo.com	+2 010 17480710
FAO Egypt	Mr Mohamed Yacoub	Assistant FAO Representative	mohamed.yacoub@fao.org	+2 010 11173586
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan				
Institutions	Name	Title	Email	Phone
Ministry of Agriculture	Mr Awni Al Shdaifat	Agricultural Directorate Director	awnikh@yahoo.com	+962 799059492
Ministry of Social Development	Mr Omar Helal Al Rabta	Director of Social Development	omar.alrabtah@gmail.com	+962 777264701
FAO Jordan	Ms Dena Abualouf	Project officer	dena.abualouf@fao.org	+962 799467087
Islamic Republic of Iran				
Institutions	Name	Title	Email	Phone
Ministry of Cooperatives, Labour and Social Welfare	Mr Ahmad Meidari	Deputy Minister for Social Welfare	ahmadahmad1342@yahoo.com	+098 9124917318
Agricultural Planning, Economic and Rural Development Research Institute (APERDRI); Ministry of Jihad and Agriculture;	Ms Atousa Bakhtiari	Expert of Development in APERRI (Agricultural Planning, Economic and Rural Development Research Institute)	bakhtiari.at@gmail.com	+098 9124276233
FAO Iran	Mr Saeid Ferdowsi	FAO National consultant, Acting Head of Programme and Partnership Unit	Saeid.Ferdowsi@fao.org	+098 9125076875

Republic of Iraq				
Institutions	Name	Title	Email	Phone
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	Mr Faleh Alamiri	Senior Deputy Minister	mochiraq@yahoo.com	+964 7717075555
Ministry of Agriculture	Mr Amenah Taresh Dawood Al-Ibadi	Senior and Agricultural Engineer, Planning and Follow up Department	amna_1961@yahoo.com	+964 7901573971
FAO Iraq	Ms Lubna Al Tarabishi	Programme Officer	Lubna.altarabishi@fao.org	+964 7510165122
The Lebanese Republic				
Institutions	Name	Title	Email	Phone
Ministry of Social Affairs	Mr Bachir Osmat	Advisor to the Ministry of Social Policy and Poverty	bashiros7@yahoo.fr	+961 3 673405
Ministry of Social Affairs	Ms Lina Fakih	Director of Nutrition Programme	linafakih@gmail.com	+961 03 277143
Ministry of Social Affairs	Mr Abeer Abdel Samad	Head of NGOs Department	mozawlb@hotmail.com	+961 03 895025
Ministry of Social Affairs	Ms Marie Louise Abou Jaoude'	Senior Urban Planner, Office of Prime Minister	maboujaoudeh@pcm.gov.lb	+961 03 234524
Ministry of Social Affairs	Ms Wadih Tueni	Project manager of National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP)	wtueni@nptp-mosa.com	+961 3 241642
Ministry of Agriculture	Mr Amal Salibi	Head of Economic Studies and Statistics	asalibi@agriculture.gov.lb	+961 3323969
Sultanate of Oman				
Institutions	Name	Title	Email	Phone
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries	Mr Ibrahim Al-Naamani	Director of Planning of Agriculture Studies	naamani25@googlemail.com	+968 99475716
Palestine				
Institutions	Name	Title	Email	Phone
Ministry of Social Development	Mr Ayman Sawalha	Minister's Advisor for Programs	aaasawalha@gmail.com	+972 599429953
Ministry of Agriculture	Mr Hasan Hasqar	Director General of Planning and Policies	hasan.ashqar@moa.pna.ps	+970 598931077
FAO Palestine	Mr Pirro Tomaso Perri	Policy Officer	PirroTomaso.Perri@fao.org	+972 548026710
Republic of Sudan				
Institutions	Name	Title	Email	Phone
Ministry of Welfare and Social Welfare	Ms Fatima Ahmed Fadul Madawi	General Director of Poverty Reduction Center	fatimafadul2011@hotmail.com	+249 912 995 824
Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forests	Mr Suad Abdalla Ali Ramram	Director of the Gender Mainstreaming and Development Unit	suadramram2000@yahoo.com	+249 117 670 347
FAO Sudan	Mr Elwathig Mukhtar Hamid	Assistant FAO Representative	elwathig.mukhtarhamid@fao.org	+249 912396711

Syrian Arab Republic				
Institutions	Name	Title	Email	Phone
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour	Bahaa Alkhoury	Director, Rural Development Department	bahaa1974@live.com	+963 0944261241
Ministry of Agricultural and Agrarian Reform	Mr Raid Hamza	Director of National Agricultural Policy Center	raid.hamza@gmail.com	+963 933 671 941
FAO Syria	Mr Bassem Mohuammad	Income Generating Activities/National Consultant	bassem.mouhammad@gmail.com	+963 993 338794

Republic of Yemen				
Institutions	Name	Title	Email	Phone
FAO Yemen	Mr Mohamed Sallam	Assistant FAO Representative	Mohamed.Sallam@fao.org	+967 733255052

PARTNERS

Institution	Country	Name	Title	email
EU Delegation	Lebanon	Mr Ryan Knox	Programme Manager	ryan.knox@eeas.europa.eu
		Ms Elena Ascitti	Programme Manager	Elena.ASCIUTTI@eeas.europa.eu
		Mr Charles Abdallah	Economist	Charles.abdallah@eeas.europa.eu
ESCWA United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Lebanon	Ms Gisella Nauk	Chief Social Policy Section	nauk@un.org
		Ms Zuzana Vuova	Associate Social Affairs Officer	zuzana.vuova@un.org
ILO International Labour Organization	Lebanon	Ms Ursula Kulke	Senior Regional Social Security Specialist	kulke@ilo.org
IPC-IG International Policy Centre for inclusive growth	Belgium	Mr Fabio Veras Soares	Senior Research	Fabio.veras@ipc-undp.org
Oxfam International	Lebanon	Ms Rachel Eiccholz	Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods Coordinator	REiccholz@oxfam.org.uk
UNICEF	Lebanon	Ms Violet Speak Warnery	Chief Field Operations and Social Policy	vwarnery@unicef.org
		Ms Christina Bock	Social Policy Officer	cbock@unicef.org
		Ms Sarah Shahyar	Social Policy Specialist	sshahyar@unicef.org
University of Bath	United Kingdom	Ms Rana Jawed	Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Social Policy	R.Jawed@bath.ac.uk
WHO World Health Organization	Egypt	Ms Hala Abou-Taleb	Medical Officer, Policy and Health Planning, Health Systems Development Department	aboutalebh@who.int

Institution	Country	Name	Title	email
WFP World Food Programme	Egypt	Ms Muriel Calo	Programme Policy Officer Resilience & Livelihoods	muriel.calo@wfp.org
		Mr Hans Vikoler	Programme Advisor/Head of Programme	hans.vikoler@wfp.org
FAO/HQ	Italy	Ms. Maya Takagi	Deputy Strategic Programme Laeder	maya.takagi@fao.org
		Mr Etienne Juvanon Du Vachat	Resilience Expert	Etienne.JuvanonDuVachat@fao.org
		Ms Natalia Winder Rossi	Global Social Protection Team Officer	Natalia.WinderRossi@fao.org
		Ms. Ariane Genthon	Child Labour Expert	Ariane.Genthon@fao.org
		Mr Omar Bennamour	Social Protection Specialist	Omar.Benammour@fao.org
FAO/LEBANON	Lebanon	Mr Maurice Saade	FAO Representative	Maurice.Saade@fao.org
		Mr Bruno Minjauw	Resilience and Liaison Officer	Bruno.Minjauw@fao.org
		Ms Faten Adada	National Coordinator on Social Protection and Child Labour in Agriculture Programme	faten.adada@fao.org
		Ms Anastascia AlHajj	Media and Communications Consultant	Anastacia.AlHajj@fao.org
		Ms Marie Louise Hayek	Programme Assistant and Gender focal point	MarieLouise.Hayek@fao.org
FAO/RNE	Egypt	Mr Alfredo Impiglia	Delivery Manager, Small- Scale Family Farming Regional Initiative	Alfredo.Impiglia@fao.org
		Mr Ayman Omer	Senior Field Programme Officer	ayman.omer@fao.org
		Ms Flavia Lorenzon	Consultant	flavia.lorenzonz@fao.org
		Ms Ana Pizarro	Consultant	Ana.Pizarro@fao.org
		Ms Phoebe Lewis	Junior Professional Officer	Phoebe.Lewis@fao.org
		Ms Nadida Osman	Office Assistant	nadida.osman@fao.org



**TECHNICAL MEETING ON
SOCIAL PROTECTION
AS A TOOL FOR
POVERTY REDUCTION IN
THE NEAR EAST AND
NORTH AFRICA**

Despite recent progress, almost one billion people are still living in poverty and around 800 million people are food insecure. Most of these people live in rural areas of developing countries and are small family farmers who depend on agriculture. They are particularly exposed to natural risks, in addition to man-made and economic shocks, and face perpetual difficulties accessing natural resources, public services, functioning input and output markets (e.g. credit, insurance) and local institutions. The situation facing rural women is exacerbated in this context. As seen in the Sustainable Development Goals, social protection is gaining importance as an intervention to eradicate poverty, food insecurity and inequalities, including those related to gender. However, it is estimated that 73 percent of the world's population have no access to adequate social protection.

The 2015 edition of FAO's State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) report highlighted the important role social protection plays not only in allowing poor families to access more and better food, but also in enhancing their fundamental economic potential. SOFA further concluded that strengthened coherence and synergies between social protection and agricultural interventions would also help to maximize these impacts and ultimately help to break crippling intergenerational cycles of poverty.

For the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region, these linkages are critical. Social protection can contribute to addressing the range of vulnerabilities affecting rural, small scale farmers, such as dependency on imported food, high population growth, strain over basic social and productive services due to migratory flows as well as increasing vulnerability to natural disasters and the negative effects of climate change. The NENA region has a diverse landscape in terms of social protection but the overall coverage, especially in the rural areas, remains low. However, efforts to strengthen linkages between social protection and the agricultural sector in NENA need to be further explored by all stakeholders involved in strengthening social protection within member states. These proceedings summarise the main issues raised on this topic at the Technical Meeting on Social Protection as a tool for poverty reduction in the Near East and North Africa Region.

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