



GLOBAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER
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Special edition on social protection

Social Protection - Introduction

June has been a brilliant month for major progress in the establishing of a world-wide movement and adoption of the social protection floor initiative. Current President of ICSW Christian Rollet delivered a statement on social protection to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva (see below). The speech supported the resolution of the International Labour Conference on national floors for social protection. Subsequently Michael Cichon, Director Social Security Department at the ILO reported that on 14th June the 101st International Labour Conference adopted its Recommendation R. 202 on national floors for social protection by 456 votes in favour, no votes against and only one abstention. (More below on the Recommendation)

This is the first autonomous ILC Recommendation in social security in 68 years and a major contribution to International Standard Setting in social protection. It sets out the two dimensional extension strategy for social security of the International Labour Organisation. It recommends that countries seek to provide higher levels of protection guided by ILO conventions to as many people as possible and as soon as possible on the basis of a social protection floor for all.

The next steps fit entirely within ICSW's proposed global programme for 2012 to 2016 – taking the Recommendation to countries and supporting national social protection floor policies on a much bigger scale than before.

Statement by ICSW President Christian Rollet to the International Labour Conference

"The International Council on Social Welfare has been devoted to the promotion of social rights especially in the field of social protection since 1928."

"This is why we welcome with great satisfaction the initiative in 2009 by the International Labour Organisation and the UN system for a Social Protection Floor (SPF). We recognise the importance of the work done jointly on the SPF by the 19 international organisations coordinated by the ILO and WHO. We are convinced that the implementation of a SPF in every country is a key element in the fight against poverty and more broadly in the solution to the global economic crisis. As delegates to this conference, you know that social protection cannot be seen only as a financial burden: it can also contribute to the improvement of productivity, be a buffer to soften the shock of the crisis, and improve social cohesion and individual well-being. The Bachelet report has shown it very well. But many decision makers still have to be convinced." (*Social protection floor for a fair and inclusive globalization* – http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_165750/lang--en/index.htm in English, French and Spanish).

"We hope this week the International Labour Conference will adopt the Resolution on social protection. If this happens it will help convince governments to adopt a national SPF

implementation plan if they have not done so already. It will also help to fully incorporate the SPF concept into the post MDG development agenda for the period after 2015.”

“At our last ICSW General Assembly in Hong-Kong 2010, ICSW resolved to support the implementation of the SPF as a key element of our strategy. We have asked our members in more than 70 countries to mobilise civil society to adopt the concept of the SPF, analyse the priorities at country level and influence governments to implement it.”

“We have already achieved results. For instance, the 6th ASEAN GO-NGO forum held in Bangkok in September 2011 adopted recommendations for the establishment of the SPF within the ASEAN countries. We have organised international and regional workshops to give leaders of national umbrella organisations of NGOs the opportunity to discuss the implementation of a SPF and the means to lobby the governments in their countries. We did this for instance in Dakar (October 2010), Casablanca (May 2011) and Douala (December 2011).”

“Many other NGOs are taking up the initiative. These actions are now converging through the adoption by more than 55 NGOs of a statement supporting the Recommendation which is on the agenda of this conference. We think this important first step will be followed by many others. Our joint action will bring to the SPF the strength of our networks and the added value of our experiences.”

“Civil society wants to participate in the creation of national social protection floors. This will happen at country level on a practical basis and according to national specificities. Of course, in each country it is up to governments and societies to make decisions on the shape of their social protection floor. The role of the parliaments will be to vote for the fiscal space which is needed to make it a reality. Every citizen may contribute usefully to the definition of the needs, the selection of priorities and the ways of implementing a SPF. NGOs will play an important role in helping societies to articulate the political will that is the most important pre-requisite for political action.”

International Labour Conference Recommendation National Floors of Social Protection (Extracts)

The following are extracts from the Recommendation. Basically the Recommendation gives countries the blueprint to build their social protection floors. This is not just for developing countries. With the growing crises in the developed world economies, civil society needs to look to the principles on which their social security systems were established and see if those principles are still consistent with the International Labour Conference Recommendation.

Objectives, scope and principles

“The Recommendation provides guidance to Members to: (a) establish and maintain, as applicable, social protection floors as a fundamental element of their national social security systems; and (b) implement social protection floors within strategies for the extension of social security that progressively ensure higher levels of social security to as many people as possible, guided by ILO social security standards.”

The Recommendation sets down 18 principles including universality, non-discrimination, social inclusion, progressive realisation, transparency, coherence and monitoring of implementation. It mentions “tripartite participation with representative organizations of employers and workers, as well as consultation with other relevant and representative organizations of persons concerned.”

National social protection floors

The first statement under the second heading is “Members should, in accordance with national circumstances, establish as quickly as possible and maintain their social protection floors comprising basic social security guarantees. The guarantees should ensure at a minimum that, over

the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and to basic income security which together secure effective access to goods and services defined as necessary at the national level.”

The Recommendation goes on to define the composition of the floors which should include “at least” – “(a) access to a nationally defined set of goods and services, constituting essential health care, including maternity care, that meets the criteria of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality;

(b) basic income security for children, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, providing access to nutrition, education, care and any other necessary goods and services;

(c) basic income security, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income, in particular in cases of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability;

And (d) basic income security, at least at a nationally defined minimum level, for older persons.”

The Recommendation states the basic social security guarantees should be established by law.

National strategies for the extension of social security

“Members should formulate and implement national social security extension strategies, based on national consultations through effective social dialogue and social participation. National strategies should: (a) prioritize the implementation of social protection floors as a starting point for countries that do not have a minimum level of social security guarantees, and as a fundamental element of their national social security systems; and (b) seek to provide higher levels of protection to as many people as possible, reflecting economic and fiscal capacities of Members, and as soon as possible.”

Monitoring

“Members should monitor progress in implementing social protection floors and achieving other objectives of national social security extension strategies through appropriate nationally defined mechanisms, including tripartite participation with representative organizations of employers and workers, as well as consultation with other relevant and representative organizations of persons concerned. Members should regularly convene national consultations to assess progress and discuss policies for the further horizontal and vertical extension of social security.”

The link to the text of the Recommendation in English, French and Spanish – is at http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/101stSession/reports/provisional-records/WCMS_183326/lang--en/index.htm

Launch of the Social Protection Floor inter-agency website

The Social Protection Floor inter-agency website has been launched and can be accessed at www.socialprotectionfloor-gateway.org

UNICEF has been working on developing the site since late 2011 assisted by ILO and HelpAge International and others. The intent behind the website is to provide users with an agency-neutral, unified voice on the SPF and to serve as a resource for users not necessarily familiar with the concept. As such, the goal is to make the website a user-friendly, well-structured and streamlined source of information on the SPF and the Initiative.

The site will highlight country experiences and provide resources including the SPF Costing Tool. The website will serve as a key entry point for practitioners and country-level staff, helping to foster their interest in the concept.

The Human Rights Approach to Social Protection

Kate Donald Adviser to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights has announced the release of a new book on “The Human Rights Approach to Social Protection”, written by Magdalena Sepúlveda (UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights) and Carly Nyst. The book is published by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. The publication is designed to fill a vacuum in the global literature on social protection by providing

a readable and comprehensive overview of social protection. The book is divided into three main sections:

- An analysis of the relationship between poverty, human rights and social protection;
- A framework for the human rights-based approach to social protection;
- Conclusion: the future of social protection.

The 3.8Mb 72 page publication is available for free download in PDF

<http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=250472&nodeid=34606&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI>

Engaging government and civil society in social protection

Christian Rollet, President of ICSW has contributed an article to the 2012 Commonwealth Ministers Reference Book on the purpose and vision of universal access to basic services. The article appears on pages 264 to 266. The article and in fact the whole Reference Book can be accessed at

http://www.commonwealthministers.com/publications/read/commonwealth_ministers_reference_book_2012/

UNICEF Social Protection Strategic Framework

UNICEF has developed its first ever Social Protection Strategic Framework which articulates UNICEF's approach to social protection, makes the case for child-sensitive interventions, and proposes a collaborative policy agenda for social protection and children. The Framework was officially launched in May 2012. The Framework is a resource and a platform for further collaboration, as thus strives to influence the social protection agenda for the coming years, in line with UNICEF's equity focus and the need to maximize sector-wide outcomes for children. The Framework can be accessed at: <http://www.unicef.org/socialprotection/framework/>

Other major organisations have released social protection strategies including the EU in June 2012

http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/EC_SP_presentation.pdf and the World Bank <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPROTECTION/0,,contentMDK:23043115~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:282637,00.html> (Resilience, equity and opportunity The World Bank's Social Protection and Labor Strategy 2012–2022)

Stockholm Joint World Conference Social Work and Social Development

Registrations are up to 2000. Don't miss out. Go to <http://www.swsd-stockholm-2012.org/> to register. The Conference webpage lists the main speakers <http://www.swsd-stockholm-2012.org/Invited-Plenar-Speakers.aspx>

Call for expressions of interest Joint World Conference 2016

The Joint Committee, representing the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) and the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW), is calling for expressions of interest (EOI) for organizing and hosting the 2016 Joint International Conference on Social Work and Social Development. Under the current agreement, the first conference was held in Hong Kong in 2010, the second will be held in Stockholm, Sweden in 2012, and the third in Melbourne, Australia in 2014. The conference is generally held in the month of July and anticipated to attract a minimum of 1,500 participants. For further information <http://www.icsw.org/globalev/globalevf.htm#2016>

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