

UNITED NATIONS-REQUEST FOR INPUTS TO 10" SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON AGEING

TOPIC: SOCIAL PROTECTION AND SOCIAL SECURITY INCLUDING

SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS AND EDUCATION, TRAINING, LIFE-LONG LEARNING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

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Social Protection:

The adoption of the MDGs in 2000, social protection was no longer sidelined as a minor debate within the international development community. The need to extend social protection was a newfound matter of consensus, whose apparent accord obscured differences of opinion about what the extension of social protection would mean in practice.

While the World Bank and the DfID were the major contributors to the conceptualisation of social protection, they were joined by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, UNICEF, UNDP, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) - with its Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and its specialised arm, the Poverty Reduction Network (POVNET) — the ILO and the International Social Security Association (ISSA), along with a host of international foundations and organisations, such as Oxfam and HelpAge International, as well as bilateral development organizations.

According to the first approach, promoted by what may be referred to as the Instrumentalists, inequality, vulnerability and the risks inherent to extreme poverty impede the achievement of the MDGs. On the basis of this observation, the World Bank created a Social Protection and Labor division, which reformulated the concept of social policy as “social risk management” (SRM). This new concept provided an expanded view of social protection, taking it in a new direction. The essence of SRM lies in reducing extreme poverty through better risk management. Significantly, the concept of risk is defined inclusively, in as much as encompasses social, economic, political and environmental risks, including labour market-related risks, such as unemployment and non-employment. The SRM program also targets those individuals who are “most vulnerable, they typically lack appropriate risk management instruments. The World

Bank thus emphasized “the double role of risk management instruments — protecting basic livelihood as well as promoting risk taking” (Holzmann and Jargensen, 2000).

The “social rights for the poor” school of thought, correspondingly, denounces extreme poverty and inequality as symptoms of social injustice and structural inequality. Generally, its Supporters seek to institute a comprehensive approach incorporating social protection into development policy. The DfID and the IDS exercise significant influence over both relevant international organisations, such as the World Bank, and the international community as a whole.

Social Security:

Is any government system that provides monetary assistance to people with an inadequate or no income.

Social security is asserted in Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: **“Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each state, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality”**.

Social Protection Floor:

Social Protection Floor (SPF) is the first level of social protection in a national social protection system. It is a basic set of social rights derived from human right treaties, including access to essential services (such as health, education, housing, water and sanitation, and others, as defined nationally) and social transfers, in cash or in kind, to guarantee income security, food security, adequate nutrition and access to essential services.

Building from past social protection programs, the SPF promotes a more coordinated design and implementation of social and labour policies in order to guarantee a country-defined basic set of social rights, services and facilities that every person should enjoy, which could be granted through:

- Cash transfers such as a social pension;
- Conditional cash transfers;
- Universal access to health care services;
- Food-based programs, as well as food stamps, vouchers and coupons;
- School supplies and uniforms;
- Vocational and training programs for the unemployed;
- Price subsidies for food, electricity, housing, or other public service; and
- Other programs.

To insure continuity and sustainability, these strategies build on existing social protection mechanisms and include a mix of contributory and non-contributory, targeted and universal, public and private instruments — depending on the social, economic and political context.

A global coalition of United Nations agencies, international NGOs, development banks, bilateral organization and other development partners, the Social Protection Floor - Initiative Coalition (SPF-I Coalition), has been created to support countries with the establishment, expansion and edification of their national social protection floors.

Education, Training, Lifelong Learning

There is a critical need for a greater overall investment in education and training, particularly in Developing Countries. Education and training investments should be closely linked to economic and employment growth strategies and programmes.

Capacity-Building

The Social Protection Floor develops a wide range of knowledge dissemination activities through capacity building, training and education in the social protection and social security field.