

4th Session of the Open Working Group on the Sustainability Development Goals

17 June 2013;
Social Protection, Employment and Decent Work

HelpAge International

2 minute statement from the floor

HelpAge International would like to emphasise that social protection cannot be left to a sub, goal or sub- target under a poverty elimination goal.

It is not just a residual set of policies for **those 'left behind'**, but a **core enabler** for healthy lives, productive livelihoods and environmental sustainability. Social protection underpins and complements the realisation of multiple goals beyond poverty and inequality.

For example, Social protection **is at the heart of any social contract** between the state and its citizens and arguably plays a distinctive role promoting good governance outcomes.

Furthermore, to echo the technical brief for this session, people who live in extreme poverty and risk **cannot focus on conservation and environmental issues as a priority of their daily lives**.

Therefore, **only as a standalone goal** will social protection be recognised for its contribution to this broader sustainable development agenda.

On the question of **what such a goal should look like**, there is consensus that **the priority for social protection systems should be the extension of nationally owned floors**:

The Social Protection Floor concept has gained endorsement through the UN system, the G20, the EU, and by 150 countries who approved the Recommendation 202 for social protection floors in 2012.

The language of the social protection floor is necessary for the next development framework. Loose references to *social protection* and *social protection systems* without clarifying the conceptual basis will undermine the breadth, depth and effectiveness of what can be achieved under the next development framework. The social protection floor is appropriate because;

- It is based on the **human rights framework**
- It emphasises **national ownership**
- It sets *clear objectives* that make it **measurable** and against which progress can be monitored.

Alongside 37 other national and international NGOs as part of the Global Coalition for a Social Protection Floor HelpAge International suggests a goal to:

Goal: End poverty and establish a social protection floor for everyone, including

a) Food security: End hunger and malnutrition and protect the right of everyone to have access to sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious food.

b) Health care: Ensure access to affordable health care, including essential drugs, on a sustainable basis.

c) Education: Ensure that every girl and boy, regardless of circumstances, completes secondary education and has access to technical and vocational training.

d) Social security: Guarantee income security up to at least the level of the national poverty line.

e) Housing: Ensure decent housing for all with security of tenure.

h) Water and sanitation: Ensure universal access to safe drinking water at home, and in schools, health centres, and refugee camps; end open defecation - ensure universal access to sanitation at school, in the workplace and in the home.

On implementation, **potential for sustainable financing exists** both at the national and international levels. For example at the national level through the re-allocation from national budgets – for example away from fossil fuel subsidies (thereby supporting the *Just Transition*) . Also, as the technical brief highlights, proposals have already been tabled for a Global Fund for Social Protection by the UN Special Rapporteur on *the Right to Food* and the Special Rapporteur for *Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*.

Such financing arrangements could serve as an international social protection mechanism to promote global solidarity and to harmonise financing and technical support to Low Income Countries to remove the greater economic risk they face in investing in rights-based social protection.

Thank you.