



## REALISING UNIVERSAL RIGHTS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION

### BRIEFING PAPER

#### INTRODUCTION

In pursuit of its original 2001 vision “To end the outrage of child poverty” and in response to its 2005 worldwide consultation with children and their carers the **Grow Up Free From Poverty Coalition** has embarked on a campaign for the extension and establishment of social protection measures, specifically cash transfers, as an important contribution towards ending child poverty. The coalition is committed to furthering human rights and the rights-based approach to development and believes that now is the time to refresh the vision of a world in which all citizens are entitled to be protected by right from desperate poverty and destitution.

This paper does not attempt to be a comprehensive briefing on all aspects of social protection but explains how and why the coalition has arrived at its current focus. There are a number of recent publications and research papers which provide valuable information on the current social protection debates and programmes; references are given at the end of the paper.

#### 1. SOCIAL PROTECTION WORKS

In 2005 the Grow Up Free From Poverty coalition published a report “Achieving Our Dreams for 2015” based on consultations in 20 countries with over 4000 children and their carers. A significant finding of the report was the damaging impact the struggle families have to earn sufficient income to cover basic needs has on children. A major recommendation of the report was that:

**Children living in extreme poverty should be targeted with direct measures, in addition to sectoral expenditure (health and education), and indirect measures aimed at poverty reduction.**

Members of the coalition have been devoting attention to different models of, and approaches to, social protection in their search for effective ways to further the rights of poor families and disabled people. Members of the coalition, Plan International, Save the Children and Help Age International, among others, have demonstrated clearly<sup>1</sup> how social protection measures, in addition to being rights in themselves, can contribute to the rights of children and their carers to survival, development and protection. Their reports demonstrate how different forms of cash transfers such as family benefits, child allowances and social pensions in addition to in-kind transfers such as nutritional supplementation programmes, food aid, school feeding programmes, as well as fee waivers and exemptions, can reduce poverty and malnutrition and improve access to health, a healthy diet, education and welfare services.

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<sup>1</sup> Plan International, *Ending Child Poverty & Securing Child Rights: The Role of Social Protection*, 2005  
Save the Children UK, *Institute of Development Studies, HelpAge International, Making Cash Count*, 2005

**The emerging experience within and outside the coalition shows that social protection fills an important gap in the poverty response and can make a real difference to people's lives. We therefore believe that the scope and coverage of social protection policies and practices must be expanded.**

Members of the coalition, organisations and faith groups with links to many of the poorest communities in the world, have been frustrated at the failure of development policies to have an impact on the lives of many of the poorest children and their families. They are not benefiting from poverty alleviation strategies, as the slow progress towards the MDGs in many countries demonstrates. Current strategies are directed at work and the employed rather than dependents or those, including millions of children under sixteen and older people over 60, who struggle to earn a living in informal sectors; a new approach is needed.

There is increasing evidence that investment in social protection packages, specifically cash transfers – a policy which has been, and still is, considered a vital tool across Europe in ending extreme deprivation – can and does work in the South. Small cash transfers can and do have a major impact on household security, nutrition, and the costs of schooling, housing, transport and small business investment. Evidence showing that they relieve financial constraints on school attendance and other forms of skill acquisition suggests they are one of the most effective forms of government expenditure. Recent research in South Africa<sup>2</sup> estimates that receipt of the Child Support Grant during the first 36 months of a child's life gives a significant boost to their health and nutritional status as demonstrated by increased height-for-age. Evidence and evaluations of a number of programmes demonstrate that modest amounts of cash, in the form of social pensions, child grants and disability benefits, can provide regular and predictable incomes which, if delivered over a period of time, reduce vulnerability to shocks, allow the accumulation of assets and the improvement of livelihoods.

The old age pension in Lesotho, introduced in late 2004, for example, has already improved household security by increasing food consumption for the pensioners themselves and for other household members; the health status and nutrition of the pensioners and their dependents has improved as they are able to buy more nutritious food, previously beyond their means, such as meat and other protein.

## **2. A VISION BEYOND SAFETY NETS**

**The Grow Up Free From Poverty Coalition believes that social protection must move beyond the limits of 'safety net policies' to be embedded in the heart of government development policy. This transforms social protection into a human rights strategy that will protect people from the consequences of deprivation, prevent it, promote more secure lives, and transform the systems, policies and structures which generate vulnerability. The coalition believes it is important to challenge narrower approaches which leave the causes of deprivation untouched.**

Since the early 1990s there has undoubtedly been renewed interest in the potential of social protection measures to reduce the vulnerability of poor families and protect them from severe deprivation. However, much of the recent interest and conceptual discussion has evolved from the "safety net" approach which developed in the context of the need to protect poor families from the impact of structural adjustment programmes. This represents a narrow view of social protection as a short term response to crisis and shocks. In the 1980s and 1990s the neo-liberal ideology which influenced both macroeconomic and aid policies dictated and constrained social policy promoting user fees, means testing and the market delivery of social services. A partial result of the reaction to this - the recent stronger emphasis on "poverty reduction" - has paradoxically also tended to

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<sup>2</sup> Jorge M. Aguero, Michael Carter, Ingrid Woolard, *From Flows to Stocks: The Impact of Unconditional Cash Transfers on Human Capital* (2005)

reduce the remit of social policy and social administration to the limited, though vital, task of poverty alleviation. Other objectives such as equity and national and social cohesion have received less attention.

A broader view of social protection is evolving in which social protection measures are seen as interventions designed to further human rights as well as tackle the causes of poverty; as forms of investment that enable poor families to deal with a range of vulnerabilities, stresses and risks. People are helped to conserve and accumulate assets so that they can seize opportunities previously out of their reach, and transform their socio-economic relationships and status through having regular access to income and services.

The coalition sees social protection in this broad, potentially transformative way and in the context of the universal human rights framework. More than 50 years ago the universal rights to social security and an adequate standard of living were recognized and these rights, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). These provisions have since been augmented in other instruments and declarations, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>3</sup>. Despite their clear, unequivocal and visionary formulations these fundamental rights have yet to be translated into global standards or effective national programmes.

## Definitions

As indicated above, different historical and ideological perspectives on social protection have led to there being many different definitions. Social protection generally refers to a set of benefits available from the state, market, civil society and households, or through a combination of these agencies, to the individual/households to reduce multi-dimensional deprivation. This broader concept, now being explored in some developing countries is perhaps more applicable than the concept of social security which applies in countries in which large number of citizens depend on the formal economy for their livelihood.

The coalition defines social protection thus:

‘Social protection encompasses a range of protective public actions carried out by the state or by others in response to unacceptable levels of vulnerability and poverty. It includes social assistance to extremely poor individuals and households; social services to groups who need special care or would otherwise be denied access to basic services; social insurance to protect people against the risks and consequence of livelihood shocks; and social equity to protect people against social risks such as discrimination or abuse.<sup>4</sup>

Ultimately the coalition aspires to the form of contemporary Universal Social Protection elaborated by Koy Thomson<sup>5</sup> which would provide every citizen with:

1. **Protection through relief**, safety nets and free basic services (for example, disability allowances, free basic health care and education, free public transport, state pensions, support to orphans, food relief and public works.)
2. **Prevention of deprivation** and smoothing of production and consumption falls through social insurance, employment guarantees, and risk reduction (for example, health insurance, unemployment benefits, employment guarantees, school feeding, support to crop diversification).
3. **Security to take livelihood and economic risks**, through a universal basic income and affordable credit.
4. **Freedom from the structural causes of vulnerability**, such as discrimination, stigma, domestic and other violence

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<sup>3</sup> Final draft under negotiation.

<sup>4</sup> IDS Working Paper 232. (2004) *Transformative social protection*. Stephen Devereux and Rachel Sabates-Wheeler

<sup>5</sup> Koy Thomson, Director, Knowledge Initiative, ActionAid, (2005) “A Proposal for a Campaign for Universal Social Protection”.

Social protection thus covers a wide range of programmes and interventions. The key agency for extending social protection is the state. Members of the coalition and other UK-based NGOs and faith groups are currently engaged in many programmes and advocacy initiatives within this broad range, such as the abolition of user fees for health treatment and education, school feeding programmes, birth registration, microfinance and employment schemes, community-based rehabilitation (CBR) schemes, programmes to ensure the access of disabled people to services, and programmes for street children; in some cases members would put all their work in this category. Some members, such as HelpAge International, are advocating for the specific introduction of the social pension, given the documented impact of regular cash in old age on both the poverty and empowerment of the recipient and dependent family members. It is this extensive involvement which has convinced the coalition that the most vital work of NGOs and faith groups must be to support the state in its the implementation of programmes for its citizens.

Members of the coalition are aware that in informal economies formal social security arrangements are almost absent for the vast majority of the working population, and that work is the norm from a young to an old age. In most developing countries the state's capacity to provide forms of social assistance for the majority of poor people across the life course is severely limited. However, the coalition is increasingly convinced that more systematic efforts must be made to build comprehensive systems within a framework for which the state is responsible. Multiple agencies may be involved in the provision of social protection but the state must be responsible, even in low income countries, for ensuring that the poorest sections of society are provided for and for regulating non-state agencies.

### **3. THE VISION: REALISING A SOCIAL MINIMUM:**

**The coalition believes that governments must commit themselves to a political programme for a universal social minimum of social protection.**

The full range of universal social protection measures listed above is ultimately desirable in all states. In particular a comprehensive programme would have an income maintenance component; a programme established by statute that insures individuals against interruption or loss of earning power. The results of the research it carried out with children and their families in 2005 indicated the importance of this. However, of even greater priority to the coalition is the need to relieve the pressures on those with *no* income: children, older and disabled people. A step-by-step approach may therefore be necessary and the immediate focus is a package of cash transfers making up a basic social minimum, long accepted as the norm in most OECD countries, of a child benefit, an old age pension and a disability grant. Such a package can be conceived of as providing a floor below which no one falls.<sup>6</sup> In most countries such a package will be financed from general revenues and provide flat-rate cash benefits to citizens without consideration of income, employment or means; they usually include old-age pensions for persons over a certain age, pensions or grants for disabled people, widows, orphans and a form of family allowance. These are based on broad categories of people; there is no test of contribution or of means.

Child benefit is a clear example. Arguments put forward in affluent countries for this include that it is paid to the mother, who will use it well, and may have no other income; it is not means-tested; the take-up is very high; it is simple to administer; it avoids dependency and stigma and it helps to protect the position of the working poor. Research in developing countries has shown small grants to mothers can *inter alia* improve health, nutrition, access to, and attendance at, and performance at school. Similar arguments are used to support the non contributory social pension, and similar levels of impact are reported.

The combined experiences of the coalition's members have led it to a commitment to rights-based, inter-generational and multi-sectoral approaches which provide a strong rationale for this social minimum package.

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<sup>6</sup> *Social Insurance and Allied Services "The Beveridge Report" 1942* Sir William Beveridge argued that the system should provide a minimum standard of living "below which no one should be allowed to fall".

## **Rights-based approaches**

The UDHR was established at a time of great global upheaval and suffering; in the years after the Second World War energetic efforts were made, in what are now the affluent countries of the OECD, to protect not only the political and legal rights of citizens but to promote their economic and social rights. The coalition believes ways must be found to realise these same rights in our time for citizens in all countries. There are compelling reasons to take a fresh look at how to fulfil these rights now, as traditional support structures are eroded by the impact of factors such as globalisation, conflict, migration, climate change, HIV and AIDS, whilst the panaceas of wealth and job creation and 'trickle-down' prove inadequate without systems and processes for redistribution.

Members of the coalition find it significant that women in rural Uganda when asked whether they would favour the introduction of child benefit were amazed at this unheard of idea, and a similar reaction was elicited from older citizens in Uganda when asked how a social pension might transform their lives, whereas women volunteers working for one member of the coalition in the UK were astonished that no such benefits existed in many countries. Yet all states have signed up to the human rights instruments which lay down these basic rights (See Annex 1).

The coalition believes strongly that the comprehensive package must address the needs of disabled people given the high level of poverty associated with disability. However, social assistance must not be a replacement for mechanisms which encourage social and economic empowerment and tackle discrimination, for example, equal opportunities policies and legislation, and inclusive health and education services.

## **An Inter-generational Approach**

Members of the coalition believe that the complex impacts of demography have been neglected by international institutions and donors. A child born in 1989 belongs to the largest generation in history. Children under 15 make up more than 40 per cent of the populations in most African countries<sup>7</sup>. Children under 18 make up half of Africa's population. There is more to this than a blunt point about population growth for in most countries population growth rates and fertility rates are now declining. The challenge is to tackle the rights and needs of this particularly large generation creatively and radically to deal with the consequences of these demographic patterns, which now include widespread youth unemployment.

In addition the number of older people is growing; as a category the over 60s, and particularly the over 80s, is the fastest growing group on the African continent. Numbers of older people will increase by 50% between 2000 and 2015 and by nearly fivefold by 2050. Discrimination, limited policies and legislation on ageing, the impact of HIV and AIDS and ongoing conflicts and emergencies mean that many older people in Africa live in poverty and are denied access to basic rights and services. This is particularly true of older women and widows who are often discriminated against in issues of inheritance and land ownership. Households headed by older women are likely to be the most impoverished and are twice as likely as other households to be caring for orphaned and vulnerable children. Older women and men are increasingly the primary carer givers of children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, war and migration.

In all countries, but as recent studies have shown, particularly in Africa the chronically poor consist of large numbers of older people, children and women of all ages, the unemployed disabled people. Estimates of poverty rates by age groups generally conclude that poverty is higher among young and older people.

The policy responses to the commitment to halve severe poverty by 2015 fail to recognise that generations live together and support each other, and that the poverty of older relatives will impact on the poverty of the younger ones, and vice versa. The result is an absence of inclusive strategies, resulting in marginalisation of children and older people. Those younger than 15 and older than 65 are seen as "vulnerable dependents". We know from our members' experience that this is not the reality. Children and older people contribute to, and have an important role to play in,

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<sup>7</sup> e.g. Angola, 48%; Burkina Faso, 49%; Burundi 46%; DRC, 46%; Ethiopia, 46%; Liberia, 47%; Malawi, 46%; Nigeria, 44%; Rwanda, 45%; Uganda, 50%.

their communities. When intergenerational approaches are pursued, they acknowledge and build on existing interdependency within households. Taking action on social protection responds to the demographics of many developing countries, but particularly in Africa.

### **Making the Links: Multi-sectoral Approaches**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their forerunners the International Development Targets have been promoted on the principle that development is an inter-sectoral process; the targets cannot be achieved in isolation. The eight MDGs are intended to be synergistic and comprehensive. Development measures are necessary across various sectors in interdependent processes, and they cannot be achieved in isolation. For example, improved nutrition affects school completion rates, improved education levels contribute to better health, better health contributes to poverty reduction, and without better nutrition ARVS cannot be effective, and so on. However, partly because government administration and financing is dominated by department and sector, and partly because of the introduction of limited indicators and targets, the inter-sectoral purpose of the MDGs has suffered. The findings of the Grow Up Free From Poverty's 2005 report indicated the dangers of allowing a narrowly focused agenda to control policy-making and budget allocation, leading to the down-grading of many inter-connecting interventions such as those affecting older people's, women's and children's rights, status and protection – labour policies, microfinance, inheritance laws, and social security, even the provision of water and sanitation, roads and transport.

In the case of children and their carers the MDGs encourage collective action through international and national programmes which tackle malnutrition, common diseases, and poor access to schooling. In these circumstances health access, education, nutrition and immunization programmes are needed. But there are many who must be reached by additional measures.

The coalition believes that a minimum package of cash transfers targeting the young, the old and the disabled should be developed within a framework of integrated empowering mechanisms, including affordable credit, safety nets in times of crisis, universal free basic education and health care. The programmes should be combined with legal and social measures which promote equality and tackle discrimination. This will ensure a multiplier effect, making the achievement of other goals far more likely.

### **4. THE SOCIAL MINIMUM: A PROGRAMME TO FULFIL THE VISION IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES: AFFORDABLE NOW**

The coalition believes that governments can afford to take the first steps towards achieving a universal social minimum by prioritising child benefits, social pensions and disability benefits

#### **Strengthening the `social contract' between state and citizen**

In recent years there has been increasing recognition (or re-recognition) that the State has a central role to play in the delivery of basic services, and a repositioning of the state after a period of comparative withdrawal which contributed to the exclusion of many groups. The delivery of social protection measures is increasingly seen by some states as part of this process, and a way to strengthen the `social contract' between the state and its citizens.

Coalition members have direct experience of working with community organisations and supporting the efforts of very poor women, children and older persons to realise entitlements, including to health and to social transfers. Our experience is that the delivery of transfers supports a process of raising awareness of entitlements, strengthening the voice of beneficiaries, ensuring oversight of delivery agencies, and improving programme governance. The delivery of social transfers in particular reduces social exclusion. Community action can strengthen this particular function of social transfers, for example by helping incorporate the poor and poorest in policy decision making and delivery, and in improving access to basic services. Community action around social transfers can ensure their effectiveness and sustainability, by strengthening the solidarity which underpins them.

## **The Policy Environment**

Following the recommendations of the Commission for Africa<sup>8</sup>, 2005 G8 commitments<sup>9</sup>, and the outcomes of the 2005 World Summit<sup>10</sup>, social protection is rising up the agenda of donors, Southern governments, IFIs and UN agencies as they seek effective tools and more comprehensive ways to reach the poorest.

The recently published DFID White Paper, setting out the UK's development priorities for the next five years commits 50% of all future bilateral aid to public services for poor people and states that social protection will be a major new area of work. In April 2005 the African Union agreed a draft framework to create integrated social policies across Africa with the objective of achieving sustainable social development by addressing structural causes of poverty and developing a strategy framework to harmonise policies. The European Union, following the ILO's steer, has also recently committed to social protection within its Decent Work for All agenda. Increasingly, EU member states like Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Germany and Portugal are also following suit by joining forces to promote social protection schemes as part of their development and humanitarian policies.

## **Affordability and sustainability**

Despite the apparent recent enthusiasm for social protection as an acceptable policy and the growing evidence of the positive impact of social protection measures on poverty and inequality levels, social protection programmes have a low profile within development policy and financing. There are still many obstacles and a series of arguments against their introduction, the foremost being the lack of resources raised through domestic taxation available to many governments and the resulting reluctance to expand current expenditures, linked to the fear that social security transfers create enduring entitlements in budgets.

The coalition is well aware that whereas inspiration can be drawn from many of the conclusions drawn by Beveridge in the historic 1942 report we cannot draw too close a comparison with today's low income countries. The Beveridge scheme was, for example, based on insurance contributions and full employment was assumed to be a pivot of a social welfare programme. Our main concern is with children, older and disabled people with little or no income. Many of the countries under discussion have high and rising unemployment, a limited tax base and are undergoing reforms to expand revenue collection.

As new member states are brought into the enlarged European Union social assistance schemes have been introduced for mothers and children without hesitation based on European Union funds. Yet hesitation still exists in contexts where mothers and children face far worse conditions. In low-income countries, in which national insurance schemes based on domestic taxation and contributory schemes do not exist, there is still a perception that cash transfers represent fiscally unsustainable and unproductive "consumption" transfers which will divert resources from more "productive" allocations. This results in the continued lack of investment in state institutions responsible for social protection which in turn limits the coverage of benefits and both internal and external confidence in their capacity to deliver national programmes. Many ministries with responsibility for social protection or assistance/welfare are chronically under-resourced, marginalised and in need of training and resources. Moreover some unsuccessful past experiences can colour attitudes to introducing or expanding existing schemes. Nevertheless a number of innovative delivery mechanisms are now in operation; including those developed in conjunction with the private sector.

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<sup>8</sup> *The Commission for Africa recommended that up to \$6 billion by 2015 be spent on social protection measures, particularly to support orphans and vulnerable children*

<sup>9</sup> *The G8 communiqué called for increased commitments for social protection of orphans and vulnerable children and for developing country governments to be supported, where appropriate, to abolish health user fees.*

<sup>10</sup> *The Outcomes Document included a 'quick win' to support developing country governments to end user fees in education.*

There is growing evidence that social protection schemes can be delivered and resourced with a combination of overseas development aid and national revenue. An increasing number of governments are recognising that schemes can be designed and managed at affordable levels of expenditure. In March 2006, the African Union and the Government of Zambia, assisted by HelpAge International, organized a regional conference for East and Southern Africa on cash transfers as a social protection instrument. The resulting "Livingstone Declaration", endorsed by 13 countries, calls for African governments to put together costed national cash transfer plans within three years that are integrated within national development plans and within national budgets, and that development partners can supplement. As indicated earlier, Lesotho, one of the world's poorest countries in terms of per capita income, implemented a universal old age pension for citizens over the age of 70 in 2004, at a cost of 1.4% GDP. Implementing a basic package of a child benefit, an old age allowance, and a disability grant would cost around 2-3% in many countries.

## **CONCLUSION**

*We believe that the case is made that the potential impact of a minimum package of cash transfers is significant in achieving children's rights; women's rights and the rights of older and disabled people. An affordable package of benefits well-designed and effectively implemented, will contribute to both poverty reduction and social equity. The time is right to improve the scope and coverage of existing measures.*

*It is our intention to draw wider attention to these issues. We have drawn up a number of objectives. As we campaign for the realisation of this universal right we are determined to explore ways of overcoming the major obstacles that are continually put in the way, such as affordability, sustainability and deliverability. Our aim is to promote debate on many of the issues which have dogged systems in affluent states and which colour attitudes to such schemes, such as the dangers of dependency and disempowerment and questions on conditional benefits.*

*In particular we wish to promote discussion at community and national level about forms of social protection in order to inform and shape government plans as they are developed. We aim to assist local communities to interact with and shape national policy debates on social protection.*

*The coalition believes the time is right to support national action and political will to make a real and tangible difference to the millions of poor children and their carers. We aim to support existing commitments such as the Livingstone Call for Action of March 2006, and will do all we can to assist in the achievement of its aims and recommendations.*



## OUR OBJECTIVES

1. To campaign for the realisation of the universal right of everyone, as a member of society, to the right to social security, through national effort and international co-operation.
2. To promote a universal minimum package of systematic social transfers including child benefit, an old age pension and a disability allowance which provides a floor below which no one falls, and that is affordable now through a combination of national and international resources.
3. To ensure that this minimum package is developed and extended within a framework of integrated empowering mechanisms (e.g. affordable credit, safety nets in times of crisis, universal free basic education and health care) combined with legal and social measures which promote equality and tackle discrimination.
4. To create, broaden, enable and support dialogue at international, national and community level that creates understanding of the rights to social protection, ensuring that the

## THE GROW UP FREE FROM POVERTY COALITION

**Vision: To end the outrage of child poverty**

*Action against child poverty is urgent. It is a moral imperative – children make up nearly 40 per cent of the world's population; 30,000 children die every day in developing countries and 183 million are malnourished. The burden of poverty, conflict and economic decline falls heavily on children – education is sacrificed, nutrition eroded and medical care is an impossible dream for many. Children have the right to grow up healthy, hopeful and educated, so that they can realise their own potential and contribute to their countries' development.*

The Grow Up Free from Poverty Coalition, currently made up of 21 NGOs, faith groups and civil society organizations with a commitment to children's rights and development, came together informally before the Westminster Conference of February 2001, a major international event on tackling child poverty worldwide, hosted by UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown and the Secretary of State for Development, Clare Short. This group, based in the UK, but with partners all around the world emphasizes a comprehensive approach to child poverty that must be embraced if the international community is to fulfil its commitments. A strength of the coalition is its broad membership, which includes large and small development NGOs, young people's organisations, organisations committed to older and disabled people's rights, and diverse faith groups.

It is committed to and consistently advocates a **rights-based, intergenerational and multisectoral approach** based on the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, CEDAW and other human rights instruments, believing these to be relevant to aid quality and delivery. In focusing on children the coalition does not overlook interdependence in households. Older people increasingly perform important functions in childcare, and the implementation of policies which benefit women, giving greater voice to mothers and older carers is essential to poverty reduction. Anti-poverty policies must be based on a life-cycle perspective, recognising the needs of individuals at different ages and the cumulative nature of deprivation.

Since the Westminster Conference the coalition has established a dialogue with the Department for International Development (DFID) and HM Treasury on issues relating to international child poverty and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Members have worked together for more than five years, publishing four reports, the "A Six Point Plan for Eliminating Child Poverty" in February 2001, "Grow Up Free From Poverty: Meeting the 2015 Targets: a progress report" in February 2002, "80 Million Lives: Meeting the Millennium Development Goals in child and maternal survival" in 2003 and "Achieving Our Dreams for 2005", a consultation with 4000 children and their carers in 2005; in collaboration with HM Treasury the coalition ran a conference for young people in the UK on achieving the MDGs, in February 2003.

The coalition has a set of aims and principles to underpin action that will contribute to meeting the 2015 targets.

*Members: Action on Disability and Development, CAFOD, Christian Socialist Movement, Connect Youth, The British Council, Consortium for Street Children, EveryChild, HelpAge International, Help the Aged, Justice, Art & Education, The Knowledge Initiative, ActionAid, The Mothers' Union, Plan UK, Sight Savers International, Save the Children UK, UNICEF UK, United Reformed Church, Viva Network, War on Want, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, World Vision UK, World Emergency Relief (WER) Chair: Marie Staunton, CEO Plan UK; [www.grow-up-free-from-poverty.org](http://www.grow-up-free-from-poverty.org)*

## A history of social protection

**1789** - Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen,

"Art. 2—The goal of any political association is the conservation of the natural and imprescriptible [i.e., inviolable] rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, safety and resistance against oppression."

**1948** - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

"Art. 22—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."

Throughout history private groups have shared risk; burial societies in Greece and Rome, mediaeval guilds in which members contributed to funds which could be drawn upon when they were no longer able to work, or died, fraternal organizations, labour unions and cooperatives. The concept of social protection has evolved to combine the mutual cooperation of citizens with a system of rights and entitlements guaranteed by the state.

The first government-run elementary provision for accident, sickness, old-age and disability insurance was introduced in Germany in 1889.

In the United Kingdom the first contributory pension scheme was introduced under Lloyd George in 1911; legislation was passed for sickness and invalidism insurance and then unemployment insurance; a result of the influence of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, the Fabian Society and trade union representatives, yet supported by Winston Churchill who described the social insurance principle as "bringing the miracle of averages to the rescue of the millions". Subsequently, the Beveridge Report of 1942 attempted to make insurance the basis for a comprehensive, universal scheme covering all major social needs. Its third principle was that "social security must be achieved by co-operation between the State and the individual. The State should offer security for service and contribution. The State in organising security should not stifle incentive, opportunity, responsibility; in establishing a national minimum, it should leave room and encouragement for voluntary action by each individual to provide more than that minimum for himself and his family". Beveridge's words mark a huge shift from the Means Test of the 1930's and from private insurance. In his view, benefits should become rights. It was revolutionary not just to introduce a system based on "insurance", backed by the state, but to design it as universal, signifying an end to all means tests.

President Franklin D Roosevelt implemented a social security system providing retirement payments to industrialised workers in the USA as part of the New Deal; he described the ideal social insurance system as one which provided economic protection "from the cradle to the grave."

Since 1945 many states have introduced national programmes. The extent of employment-related benefits is usually determined by the age of the system. Historically, social security coverage was provided first to government employees and members of the armed forces, then to workers in industry and commerce, and eventually extended to a broader range of wage earners and salaried employees through a general system. Groups that are considered more difficult to administer – domestic and agricultural workers, the self-employed are often initially excluded from coverage. Most developing countries have extended coverage gradually, the first step usually being to create a social security system covering wage and salary workers against loss of income due to work injury, in some countries old age and less commonly, disability.

### Child Benefit

Every industrial country has a package of tax allowances, cash benefits, exemptions from charges, subsidies, services in kind which assist parents with the cost of raising children. Many European countries enacted limited private schemes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and these were extended in the 1920s and 1930s. Tax allowances were first introduced into the UK in 1909. From 1918 Eleanor Rathbone argued for a system of family allowances paid directly to mothers and in the period 1940-1941, an inter-Party group was formed to accelerate their introduction in 1945. Most programmes in operation today have been in place since 1945. (International Social Security Association). The prevailing consensus has, until recently, been that developing countries do not have the domestic resources to cover universal benefits but Brazil, India, South Africa and an increasing number of countries have introduced innovative schemes.

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## ANNEX I

### Right to social protection – international instruments

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#### 1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations.

In 1948, social protection was recognized as a human right in the UDHR:

##### Article 22

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.

##### Article 23

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

2. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of **social protection**.

3. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

##### Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and **the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control**.

2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

#### 2. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966

##### Article 9

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance.

##### Article 10

The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that:

1. The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses.

2. Special protection should be accorded to mothers during a reasonable period before and after childbirth. During such period working mothers should be accorded paid leave or leave with adequate social security benefits.

3. Special measures of protection and assistance should be taken on behalf of all children and young persons without any discrimination for reasons of parentage or other conditions. Children and young persons should be protected from economic and social exploitation. Their employment in work harmful to their morals or health or dangerous to life or likely to hamper their normal development should be punishable by law. States should also set age limits below which the paid employment of child labour should be prohibited and punishable by law.

#### 3. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979

##### Article 11

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;
- (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;
- (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;
- (d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;
- (e) **The right to social security**, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;
- (f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

- (a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;
- (b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;
- (c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;
- (d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

#### **4. Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989**

##### **Article 4**

States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, **States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international cooperation.**

##### **Article 26**

1. States Parties shall recognize for every child **the right to benefit from social security**, including social insurance, and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of this right in accordance with their national law.

2. The benefits should, where appropriate, be granted, taking into account the resources and the circumstances of the child and persons having responsibility for the maintenance of the child, as well as any other consideration relevant to an application for benefits made by or on behalf of the child.

##### **Article 27**

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

2. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development.

3. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.

4. International Labour Organization  
Social security

## 1. Comprehensive standards

### Up-to-date instruments

[Social Security \(Minimum Standards\) Convention, 1952 \(No. 102\)](#)  
[Income Security Recommendation, 1944 \(No. 67\)](#)

### Instruments with interim status

[Social Insurance \(Agriculture\) Recommendation, 1921 \(No. 17\)](#)  
[Social Security \(Armed Forces\) Recommendation, 1944 \(No. 68\)](#)

## 2. Protection provided in the different branches of social security

### 2.1. Medical care and sickness benefit

#### Up-to-date instruments

[Medical Care and Sickness Benefits Convention \(No. 130\)](#) and [Recommendation \(No. 134\)](#), 1969

#### Instruments with interim status

[Medical Care Recommendation, 1944 \(No. 69\)](#)

#### Outdated instruments

[Sickness Insurance \(Industry\) Convention, 1927 \(No. 24\)](#)  
[Sickness Insurance \(Agriculture\) Convention, 1927 \(No. 25\)](#)  
[Sickness Insurance Recommendation, 1927 \(No. 29\)](#)

### 2.2. Old-age, invalidity and survivors' benefit

#### Up-to-date instruments

[Invalidity, Old Age and Survivors' Benefits Convention \(No. 128\)](#) and [Recommendation \(No. 131\)](#), 1967

### 2.3. Employment injury benefit

#### Up-to-date instruments

[Employment Injury Benefits Convention \(No. 121\)](#) and [Recommendation \(No. 121\)](#), 1964

#### Instruments with interim status

[Workmen's Compensation \(Agriculture\) Convention, 1921 \(No. 12\)](#)

### 2.4. Unemployment benefit

#### Up-to-date instruments

[Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention \(No. 168\)](#) and [Recommendation \(No. 176\)](#), 1988

## 3. Social security for migrant workers

### Up-to-date instruments

[Equality of Treatment \(Social Security\) Convention, 1962 \(No. 118\)](#)  
[Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 \(No. 157\)](#)  
[Maintenance of Social Security Rights Recommendation, 1983 \(No. 167\)](#)

### Instruments with interim status

[Equality of Treatment \(Accident Compensation\) Convention \(No. 19\)](#) and [Recommendation \(No. 25\)](#), 1925