

Investing in social protection in Africa:

Summary report of national consultations held in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Tunisia



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This process and publication has been supported by the Department for International Development

Introduction

The African Union Commission has been convening intergovernmental dialogues on social protection schemes across Africa. These follow from conferences in 2006, when a number of governments of Africa made commitments to further social protection in support of their most disadvantaged citizens.

In Livingstone, Zambia (March 2006) and in Yaoundé Cameroon (September 2006) commitments were made to implement schemes to deliver regular income through cash transfers. These commitments are articulated in two 'Calls for Action' which called for governments to:

- Strengthen social protection and social (cash) transfer interventions.
- Develop costed plans within three years.
- Engage in capacity building and experience sharing to support this work.
- Explore linkages with national programmes on social protection, Africa-wide social development programmes and targeted African Union policies.
- Adopt comprehensive social protection schemes for older people.
- Introduce universal social pensions.
- Coordinate the implementation of social protection measures involving various ministries through a comprehensive national coordination framework.
- Hold bi-annual conferences under the auspices of the African Union to ensure that follow-up dialogue takes place.

The follow-up conferences in 2008, known as the Livingstone 2 process, which are being held under the auspices of the African Union, comprise:

- Six national consultations to examine policy and plans of African governments to extend social protection for the poorest people in their countries. These meetings were organised by HelpAge International in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Tunisia in March 2008.
- Three regional expert meetings in Uganda, Egypt and Senegal in April, May and June 2008. These are designed to review government policy on social protection, debate findings and expert evidence on social protection, and discuss the outcomes of the national consultations.
- Presentation of a set of clear recommendations from the process to the First African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development in October 2008.

This report summarises the main outcomes of the national consultations. Full reports of the consultations will be made available in due course. The theme paper used for the consultations is included as Appendix 1 to this report.

Each consultation reviewed national social protection issues including policies, plans and budgets, and discussed past and future challenges and successes. Participants in the consultations included government, development partners, civil society, academic institutions, labour related organisations, United Nations agencies and multilaterals. Each consultation identified a number of next steps and made recommendations for future action. The full set of recommendations for each consultation is to be found in Appendix 2.

'Development is not an end in itself. In a democracy like ours, which puts the human person at the centre of the system, development must primarily drive the improvement of human life.'

President Paul Biya of Cameroon, November 2004

Main findings of the national consultations

Importance of political will

Each consultation affirmed the importance of high-level political commitment to raise the profile of social protection as a national policy priority. Clear statements were made by senior government representatives to this effect. All of them underlined their commitment to supporting the further development of social protection policies and budgets in their countries.

Higher-level commitment is required to deliver good-quality and sustainable programmes with wider coverage than at present. It was recognised in each consultation that coverage is generally limited in relation to need and that government ministries charged with delivering social protection require more support to expand and improve the implementation of social protection programmes.

Government and non-government participants underlined the importance of working together to increase the demand for social protection in their country, as well as to pursue the notion of inter-ministerial coherence to deliver improved and extended programmes.

Having a shared vision

All the consultations reflected a need for a shared and coherent vision of social protection in Africa, including its definition. It was felt that it is important to understand the differences and similarities of the terms ‘social security’, ‘social protection’ and ‘social solidarity’.

The definition of social protection adopted for the consultations was:

Social protection encompasses a range of public actions carried out by the state and others that address risk, vulnerability, discrimination and chronic poverty. The right to social security in childhood, old age and at times of disability is expressed in a range of international human rights declarations and treaties. Social security transfers in the form of, for example, pensions, child benefit and disability allowances are considered to be core elements of a comprehensive social protection system.

This definition emphasises the role of public actions and state provision as well as partnerships to further the human right to social protection and to social security. Linking to rights, each consultation underlined the importance of actions to further ‘social solidarity’ to reach a shared vision. Universal approaches to reaching all those currently excluded from programmes was debated.

There was agreement that more public debate was needed on the role that social protection should play in public policy, what mechanisms might be used to extend the coverage of systems and what the social protection share of national budget should be. In Mozambique specifically, the participants recommended that ways be found to increase public understanding of social protection. They made specific recommendations on the roles to be played by the media, civil society and government.

Inter-ministerial coordination

The consultations highlighted the challenges of social protection programmes being located in distinct ministries that do not operate within an overarching social protection policy. For example, efforts to extend both health coverage and cash transfer programmes are not often coordinated. Communication and data sharing is not always given priority. Design and monitoring of programmes that target distinct categories of poor people take place separately without adequate consultation and coordination. This leads to inefficient programmes and limited coverage of vulnerable people.

All consultations stressed the desirability of greater collaboration and coordination between ministries and government staff to support the development of integrated and overarching social protection policies.

For example, in Burkina Faso, the meeting recommended that an inter-ministerial committee be established to coordinate social protection and give defined action plans for each ministry. In Cameroon a social protection ‘observatory’ was recommended.

Financing and budgeting

Sustainable funding at feasible levels for social protection schemes was a common theme running through the consultations. In low-income countries policy makers are grappling with the levels of investment over the long term needed to extend programmes to large numbers of vulnerable people. Presentations from the International Labour Organization (ILO), civil society, UN agencies and multilaterals emphasised the need to look at case studies illustrating costing of existing and potential schemes. In the case of regular cash benefits, discussions also looked at how levels of transfer might be decided, and the usefulness of referring to demographics and information provided on costs set at different levels to determine feasibility as well as affordability.

The consultations agreed that there is an urgency for policy makers in finance and planning ministries to engage with social development and social security experts to draw up strategies, design pilots and calculate the budgetary requirements of programmes. Such action will support national decision making and potential support of outside donors. The representative of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security in Sierra Leone described how the process of consultation, design and implementation of a pilot for the National Safety Net programme has created much interest across government and among development partners to take the programme to a national scale.

Capacity building

All consultations highlighted that an important element of extending social protection should be more investment in capacity building: in structures, administration and technical issues. The capacity of institutions and personnel across various sectors became a central theme of the Rwanda consultation. An important challenge that was noted was how to support greater technical capacity on social protection in government and civil society organisations, not only for implementation of policies, but also for monitoring and follow-up.

In Tunisia, where there is a long-established social insurance system, the consultations highlighted the need to invest in increasing the administrative capacity of formal-sector employers who have a central role in the success of the

country's social security system.

Each consultation also underlined the future challenge of building capacity to assess the impact and effectiveness of programmes already being implemented.

Evidence and monitoring

The increasing interest in social protection in recent years has led to a growing body of evidence on the design, implementation and impact of programmes carried out by governments, multilaterals, UN agencies, universities, civil society and research institutes. The consultations highlighted the importance of a greater sharing of evidence to inform future policy. A key element in this process is inter-governmental sharing. Interest in the experience of other countries in programme design and in impact monitoring was expressed in Tunisia. Two of the three messages from the Sierra Leone consultation dealt with the need for better cross-country learning and consultation between countries with a similar context.

Of similar importance to participants was the need for improved country-specific data on poverty and vulnerability, as well as on inter-ministry dialogue on data issues. The Burkina Faso consultation recommended a baseline data system to inform policy, which would include a demographic profile of vulnerability and a mapping of key actors in the field. Civil society organisations may also have strong data which could be usefully shared with government policy makers.

Evidence frameworks are central to the design of strong monitoring systems. Such frameworks help policy makers review elements of an existing programme. They also add to the growing evidence base which will further the case for extending programmes. In Rwanda the representative of the Ministry of Local Government, Community Development and Social Affairs (MINALOC) specifically underlined this issue.

The role of civil society

The consultations underlined the importance of civil society and state partnerships in scaling up social protection to a national level. Civil society has a key role to play in supporting and informing policy processes, and in developing programmes which complement those of governments. In Rwanda, a spokesperson for the Grow Up Free From Poverty coalition - an inter-agency grouping representing the interests of children, older people and people with disabilities - described the many activities being undertaken by civil society and called for greater harmonisation and coordination between actors.

In Cameroon, the meetings highlighted the recent civil society consultations which discussed the place of civil society in relation to social protection. In Mozambique, a representative of the Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme (RHVP) gave examples of how civil society can influence both donors and government to invest resources and unify their approach. In Tunisia, a key outcome of the consultations was that civil society should be further supported to contribute to the formulation of policy.

Summary of meetings by country

Burkina Faso

The Burkina Faso national consultation was held in Ouagadougou on 3 March 2008 and was attended by 47 participants. The meeting was opened by the Minister for Work and Social Security (MTSS). Representatives of the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity (MASSN) also attended. Input was given by HelpAge International, the ILO and the University of Ouagadougou. It was affirmed that social protection is a human right and an effective means of supporting the poorest people to manage their lives and that of their dependants. Detailed discussion on issues arising was held in group work.

Government representatives described the national social protection mechanisms. These include a social insurance trust (CNSS) and a system of mutual health insurance. There is awareness that the programmes do not reach the most vulnerable citizens, including older people and rural women. The Minister made explicit recommendations that action be taken to promote social protection. The representatives of the two ministries involved in social protection, the Ministry of Social Protection and the Ministry of Social Action and Social Solidarity, used the meeting to express their commitment to furthering its reach. Representatives of the Ministry of Social Action and Social Solidarity also outlined the National Social Action Policy, passed into law in 2007, which specifically mentions the need for social protection of specific groups.

The chronic poverty experienced by many of Burkina Faso's citizens¹ has reinforced national commitment to social protection for all.² The Director General of Social Protection in the Ministry of Social Protection underlined the precarious situation of the majority of the population. Protection for the poorest people through a mix of collective public and private measures which allow individuals and groups to resist and recover from shocks is a priority. Government is aware that traditional structures of mutual assistance and solidarity are under severe strain through generalised insecurity.

One prominent issue concerned accusations of witchcraft within rural communities. The Director General of the Centre of Study, Research and Training for Economic and Social Development noted that these accusations and witchcraft-related exclusion and violence is commonly correlated with socio-economic issues. Women who are no longer considered to be economically active, for example, have a higher chance of being accused of witchcraft and of being driven from their communities.

Participants agreed there was a need for greater coherence between the policies and programmes of different departments working in social protection. Related to this was the concern that comprehensive data on poverty and those excluded from national social protection programmes was not readily available. In this regard, civil society organisations have information and insight and could be included more comprehensively in social protection policy formulation.

It was also noted that budget provision for social protection was low in relation to the needs of citizens.

Key recommendations included:

- Establishing an inter-ministerial committee under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office to improve processes and policy coherence on social protection

‘Social protection is a key tool to fight poverty, achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to consolidate democracy in Africa.’

Minister of Labour and Social Security, Burkina Faso

¹ Burkina Faso is ranked 2nd in the Human Development index

² Statistics – Human Development Report Office, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

‘The latest survey in Rwanda conducted in 2006 revealed that 56.9 per cent of the population is living below the poverty line and 36.9 per cent in extreme poverty [...] Our main challenge now is to harmonise scattered interventions to achieve a greater impact on the welfare of the population.’

*Hon. Christine Nyatanyi, Minister of
Community Development and Social
Affairs at MINALOC*

- Reviewing budgetary provision for social protection
- Giving greater attention to the data question.

Rwanda

The Rwanda national consultation was held in Kigali on 4 March 2008 and was attended by 45 participants. The Ministry of Local Government, Community Development and Social Affairs (MINALOC) played a central role in the consultations, leading proceedings and presenting on existing policy.

The Minister of Local Government, Community Development and Social Affairs spoke about Rwanda’s post-conflict context and the issues of vulnerability in the period since the 1994 genocide. The Government of Rwanda was one of the participants in the 2006 Livingstone conference. The Minister highlighted progress made in the last two years including the emphasis on social protection in the recently approved Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy. Various ministries in Rwanda have programmes of social protection. She described the pilot that is currently taking place, known as the Vision 2020 Umurenge, which has social protection at its heart. The Minister highlighted key challenges including that of vulnerability targeting, coordination between different social protection schemes, impact assessment of different schemes and sustainable funding.

Presentations were given by representatives of the World Bank, the ILO and the civil society inter-agency grouping Grow Up Free from Poverty coalition. Information was given on the gaps of coverage of existing social protection schemes. Problems faced by poor people in understanding the schemes available were shared. Youth unemployment and poverty in old age were discussed.

Information was given on the outcomes of the social mapping on vulnerability within the country. Participants were concerned as to how to respond to the findings of the mapping. An important issue that has emerged for debate is how to strengthen institutional capacity to take forward social protection at the national level. The meeting recommended that results from the mapping should be widely disseminated to stakeholders involved in social protection. Participants also highlighted the importance of including the beneficiaries themselves in the process of designing social protection policies.

Key recommendations included:

- Strengthening inter-ministerial coherence
- Supporting institutional capacity building
- Engaging civil society in the design, implementation and impact monitoring of schemes.

Mozambique

The Mozambique national consultation was held in Maputo on 10 March 2008. It was attended by 77 participants who were drawn from government, diplomatic missions, development partners, the United Nations, national civil society forums and NGOs, INGOs and trades unions. Presentations were given by government, the ILO, Care, UNICEF and the Regional Hunger and Vulnerability Programme (RHVP) with introductions given by HelpAge International.

Mozambique has important experience of social protection and cash transfer

programmes. In the early 1990s a cash transfer programme was put in place called the Gabinete de Apoio à População Vulnerável (GAPVU) which gave cash to urban dwellers living in poverty. This evolved into a programme now under the authority of the National Institute of Social Action (INAS) which supports identified groups of vulnerable people with a cash-based food subsidy.

Mozambique was also one of the African countries that attended the Livingstone conference in 2006. At the time it expressed the need for a national social protection strategy. The Minister of Women and Social Action, who had attended the Livingstone conference, highlighted the significance of the Livingstone and Yaoundé calls for action in Mozambique, and the progress made in the last two years.

Mozambique has recently approved a Law on Social Protection and an Employment and Professional Training Strategy. The cash-based food subsidy has been raised and its reach extended to rural areas. Nevertheless, the Minister signalled that further increases in this programme need to be planned and budgeted for.

Group work during the Mozambique consultation was organised by themes, which included children, people with disabilities, women, older people, and HIV and AIDS.

The discussions highlighted how these issues link to poverty which are caused and also exacerbated by lack of public investments and discriminatory culture and practice. Notwithstanding the major achievements made to support poor people in relation to new laws and programmes, challenges ahead include the need to improve implementation, funding and financial management. The consultation highlighted the importance of greater investment in institutional capacity, better coordination between sectors and improved data collection.

Key recommendations included:

- The importance of a shared vision for social protection
- The introduction of a global strategy on social protection (for example, a ‘universal minimal’ social security package)
- Greater resource allocation to the national programme
- More partnerships between government and civil society to deliver effective and sustainable programmes.

Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leone national consultation was held in Freetown on 13 March 2008. It was attended by 70 participants including representatives from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs (MSWCGA) and the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, as well as development partners, UN agencies, multilaterals and civil society.

Social protection is a recognised priority in Sierra Leone. Poverty is widespread and the country is still recovering from its ten-year civil war.³ The government expressed its commitment to social protection as a means to reduce poverty and further human rights.

The Permanent Secretary of MSWCGA outlined existing policy, including the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT). She also described

‘We recognise that guaranteeing social protection is the responsibility of every one of us. In this way, we guarantee that vulnerable people will prosper in the future, and that all people will be fully involved in society.’

Minister of Women and Social Action, Mozambique

‘Social protection [...] does not get either priority or adequate coverage in most PRSPs [Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers] [...] In these circumstances, I would like the outcome of this workshop to feed into the second generation PRSP.’

*Minister of Finance and Economic
Development, Sierra Leone*

the process begun in 2005 to develop a policy providing comprehensive and sustainable support to older people.

The Safety Net Officer of the Ministry of Employment and Social Security went on to highlight the high numbers of destitute people. He described the recently implemented Social Safety Net (SSN) programme which has been created to assist specific categories of vulnerable groups including disabled people, widows and abandoned children. The programme was set up in 2004 and has been designed through a process of nationwide sensitisation and piloting. The scheme currently has over 16,000 beneficiaries; there are plans for its extension to the whole of Sierra Leone.

Action to establish social protection frameworks on a national and regional level were identified as especially important in the Sierra Leone consultation. Other highlighted issues included the relevance of social protection to countries recovering from conflict and in those which have predominantly rural economies. It was also seen as important that groups and ministries working on issues of vulnerability collaborate more closely than hitherto, and that fragmented programming is avoided.

The representative of the Ministry of Finance noted that social protection systems are still under-resourced. He recommended that the recommendations of the consultation be fed into the second generational poverty reduction strategy process and that the recommendations should also support the formulation of a national strategy and action plan.

Key recommendations included:

- Establishing a National Policy and Legal Framework on social protection to underpin a national strategy and action plan
- Including social protection in the next Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
- Establishing a Regional (West Africa) and Continental Committee on social protection
- Including social protection in the African Union social policy framework.

Cameroon

The Cameroon national consultation was held in Yaoundé on 18 March 2008. It was attended by 50 participants including the Minister of Social Affairs, development partners, UN and multilateral agencies, INGOs and civil society.

In her opening address, the Minister of Social Affairs highlighted the strong commitment to social protection in her country. She cited the President of the Republic of Cameroon, Paul Biya, who has spoken of the need to focus on human development as a central plank of the national development policy. She reiterated the President’s commitment to social justice and to policies that promote social inclusion. She emphasised the government’s view that vulnerable populations should not be considered as passive recipients of social protection, but that they be recognised as actors in their own development who are more empowered to contribute with social protection.

The role of civil society in supporting the development of social protection nationally and regionally was a core theme in the Cameroon consultation. Various presentations were given, including one by Plan International, where information was given on a child protection programme, and one by Action Aid on a forum

held in January 2008 to foster deeper understanding of the role of civil society in social protection. This meeting underlined the importance of civil society and government working together in formulating policy and sharing knowledge.

Group work focused on social inclusion, social security and healthcare. Participants placed strong emphasis on cross-ministerial action with high-level institutional backing. They recommended greater efforts to ensure access to healthcare services for all and suggested the setting up of a national solidarity fund. Capacity building was also highlighted, including the need to build in support for vulnerable groups.

Key recommendations included:

- Formation of a Social Protection Observatory at the national level and one for the Central Africa and West Africa regions
- Incorporating social protection into the Social Development Strategy and the second generation Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
- Establishing a National Solidarity Fund
- Improving health services access for vulnerable groups.

Tunisia

The national consultation took the form of a series of meetings held on 27-30 March. Meetings were held with the Ministries of Social Development, of Social Security, and of Gender and Older People; UN agencies; the National Social Science Research Centre; the Labour Institute of the National University; the National Organisation of Employers; the National Organisation of Employees; the National Association of Retired Persons; and civil society.

Tunisia has a well-developed and rights-based social security system, based on a contribution system linked to healthcare provision, cash transfers and other benefits gained through employment. Social protection policies encompass national health and education provision. They are designed on a contribution basis, with tripartite agreements and state regulation between employer, employee and state, and on a needs (means-tested) basis from the state budget in cases of extreme need.

Investment in a mix of social, economic and financial policies is acknowledged as essential for social and political stability. Social security provision was adopted in the 1960s as a national priority in economic and social development plans. Poverty rates have been reduced steadily to 4.2 per cent in 2008. In 2006 social spending accounted for 56.2 per cent of the state budget with education and training taking 22.5 per cent, social protection 19 per cent, health 5.23 per cent and poverty-based transfers delivered through a limited programme of social assistance and social solidarity.

Reform of the health sector is under debate, with a focus on improvement of its services as well as its reach and financing. 120,000 families (representing about 500,000 people) currently benefit from the means-tested programme with limited but regular cash transfers and free health provision in public institutions as well as support for education. 5,000 families are on the waiting list for the poverty programme. 70 per cent of household head recipients are over 60. Rapid demographic transition is affecting Tunisia with a projected 17 per cent of the population being over 60 by 2029.

Discussions covered the impact of the informal economy on the social protection

‘[Social protection] supports social stability, poverty reduction and the socio-economic development of the citizen and thus contributes to strong economic growth and development.’

Report of the Tunisia consultations.

system, which is regulated, with clear obligations and responsibilities laid out between state, employee and employer. However, social protection coverage in the agricultural, fishing and domestic sectors is acknowledged to be under 50 per cent. This is due to increased levels of informal labour and employment mobility and the difficulty of adapting classic social security models to these trends. It is also recognised that increasingly employers and employees do not contribute as fully as they should to ensure adequate coverage in retirement or unemployment. As numbers of retirees are increasing, often with young dependants as the middle generation migrates in search of work, poverty in older-headed households is acknowledged to be high.

Challenges discussed included establishing a system of universal social protection coverage, based on age, for example, and the adaptation of the current system of coverage to the new modalities of work. Tunisia is exploring a number of options and undertaking pilots to encourage improved take-up of the established contribution system. It is also exploring the implications of extending the reach and budget of social protection programmes for very poor people, including cash benefits to families for health coverage, unemployment benefit and benefits to divorcees.

Key recommendations included:

- The promotion of greater public and private investment in social protection
- Social security reforms that prioritise sustainability, universality and improved quality of services
- The employment of young people and action on the social protection rights of older people
- Improved coverage of workers in the informal economy
- More civil society-state partnerships to deliver more effective management of social programmes.

Appendix One

Background paper presented by HelpAge International at the national consultations

Social protection issues in Africa

Introduction

The African Union Commission has stated that progress to-date on promoting the rights and ensuring social actions for the empowerment and well being of the population, especially vulnerable groups, has been limited in the developing world. Similarly, the track record of development ‘projects’ and humanitarian relief in lifting significant numbers of people, in particular the marginalised and disadvantaged groups, out of poverty over the longer term is poor.¹

Despite unprecedented levels of global economic growth, just under a billion people are living on less than a dollar a day, with up to a half of this number in extreme and chronic poverty.² Even if the Millennium Development Goals are met in 2015, there will still be hundreds of millions of people living in chronic poverty who will not have benefited from the measures taken to achieve these milestones.

Africa is home to some of the world’s poorest people. In sub-Saharan Africa the numbers of people living on less than US\$1.00 a day is estimated to be 314 million; a number set to rise to 366 million by 2015.³ It is increasingly recognised that policy responses to poverty in Africa need to include mechanisms to ensure access of very poor people living in chronic poverty to social services and economic security. It is essential to develop strategies which reach out to those excluded from the benefits of economic growth – including women, older people, children, persons with disabilities and persons with HIV and AIDS. These should be strategies which recognise the intergenerational nature of poverty and which are multi-sectoral in their approach.⁴

Working definition of social protection for the Livingstone 2 process

‘Social protection encompasses a range of public actions carried out by the state and others that address risk, vulnerability, discrimination and chronic poverty. The right to social security in childhood, old age and at times of disability is expressed in a range of international human rights declarations and treaties. Social security transfers in the form of, for example, pensions, child benefit and disability allowances are considered to be core elements of a comprehensive social protection system.’⁵

Why invest in social protection in Africa?

There is increasing evidence to show that social protection is an essential but often overlooked development strategy which directly reaches out to the poorest while complementing investment in other areas of social and economic development. In South Africa, for example, household survey data demonstrates that social transfers have reduced poverty by 47 per cent.⁷ A number of fiscal studies now demonstrate that social protection schemes can be delivered with a combination of overseas development aid and national revenue.

‘It is a matter of absolute urgency for Africa to invest in access of disadvantaged groups to social services.’

*Strategic Plan of the African Union Commission, 2004*⁶

¹ African Union Commission, Concept Note: *Investing in social protection in Africa*, 2008

² World Bank, *Global Monitoring Report 2007*, Washington, World Bank, 2007.

³ IFAD, *Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Rural Investment and Enabling Policy: Discussion Paper*, 2005.

⁴ See GUFFP briefing paper *Realising Universal Rights to Social Protection*, Nov 2006 at <http://www.grow-up-free-from-poverty.org/assets/docs/RightsToSocialProtection.doc>.

⁵ By implementing basic social protection, states and supporting international agencies fulfil international human obligations, as expressed in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

⁶ African Union Commission, *Strategic Plan of the African Union Commission: Volume 1 Vision and Mission of the African Union*, May 2004.

⁷ Sampson M et al., *Designing and Implementing Social Transfer Programmes*, Cape Town, EPRI, 2006.

Estimates measuring the affordability of social protection show that extending a minimum national package (child benefit, old age allowance and disability grant) to all low income countries in Sub-Saharan Africa would cost just 3 per cent of the \$25 billion increase in aid flows to Africa agreed at Gleneagles in 2005 and bring poverty reduction returns of up to 40 per cent.⁸

For these reasons social protection measures, including social cash transfers, are being extended, put in place and piloted in a range of developing countries, including the poorest countries. In some quarters social protection is considered as an essential basic service. In 2006 the UK Department for International Development (DFID) named social protection as one of the 'four essential public services' alongside education, health and water and sanitation.⁹

The impact of social protection

Evidence from long standing and pilot schemes of social protection demonstrates that social protection, including income security through regular cash transfers, delivers:

- Improved health, nutrition and social status across the life course
- Enhanced capacity of very poor people to manage risk, including chronic food insecurity and hunger
- A strengthened 'social contract' between state and citizen
- Reduced income inequality and a stronger sense of social cohesion
- Specific support in HIV/AIDS contexts through ensuring regular support for affected households
- Progress towards the achievement of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals
- Support to households to invest in economic enterprises including local business and employment

Social protection and economic growth

Improved health and nutrition can improve economic productivity in the short term, while poor families' investment in the health and education of their children can help them break out of the cycle of chronic poverty in the longer term. Cumulative evidence from Africa suggests that poor recipients of regular cash transfers spend it wisely on their families' immediate needs and to generate livelihoods. Evidence from the Kalomo pilot Cash Transfer Scheme in Zambia shows that almost half of the money was spent on investments in agriculture (such as fertilizer and livestock) with other money going to needs such as school materials.¹⁰ The universal old age pension in Lesotho is another example of a scheme where nutrition, education, health access and stability of beneficiary households have improved while the investment in local enterprise has increased.¹¹

Designing a social protection scheme

While it is widely accepted that some form of social protection should be a universal right, there is debate as to exactly how these rights should be addressed. The debate on social protection is now moving from the question of 'if' to 'how'. There is no 'one size fits all' model, and a range of different instruments and approaches have been adopted in different contexts depending on local priorities and the wider development context.¹²

To date, the institutional and legislative frameworks for social protection

⁸ DFID, *Social Protection Briefing note: Can low-income countries afford social transfers?*, 2005.

⁹ DFID, *Making Governance work for the Poor: A White Paper on International Development*, July 2006.

¹⁰ Mbandama N at al., *Social Safety Net Project Evaluation Report of the Kalomo Pilot Incentive Scheme*, Kalomo, MCDSS/GTZ 2007.

¹¹ Institute of Southern African Studies, *National Conference on the Impact of Old-Age Pension in Lesotho*, Maseru Sun Cabanas, University of Lesotho, 2007.

¹²

programmes have varied significantly. No internationally accepted model of best practice in developing countries has yet emerged. The extension of non-contributory or social transfer schemes will need to be developed alongside the extension and reform of contributory schemes. A single point of reference for social security provision needs to be considered.

Key debates about design are:

- **Targeting through means testing**

There are a number of social protection pilots which identify vulnerable people through community and other forms of means testing. Discussion centres on their relatively high cost plus evidence of exclusion and the negative impact of graduation.

- **Categorical transfers based on clear criteria**

Examples of these include child benefit, social pension and family allowance. These tend to be national schemes and are serviced through state administrative schemes. They command widespread public support.

- **Conditional schemes**

A number of pilots and geographically restricted schemes exist where transfers are given in return for behavioural change such as child immunisation or school attendance. Such schemes require adequate supply of facilities as well as the beneficiary's acceptance of the conditions.

- **Financing and sustainability**

While it is increasingly recognised that social protection is affordable, the design of any social protection policy demands careful planning and budgetary provision as well as forecasts and assurances of long-term financing.

- **Accountability and governance**

A good social protection scheme should be clear on the accountability of the provider while allowing the beneficiary adequate information to understand and to access entitlements and identify problems of provision. Engagement of the beneficiary in the development of schemes is important as well as state legislation to guarantee the benefits and to facilitate claims.

February 2008

Appendix Two: Recommendations and key messages from the national consultations

Note: Full reports of each meeting will be made available online in due course, and can be provided on request.

Burkina Faso

3 March 2008, Excellence Hotel, Ouagadougou

Recommendations

- Prioritise social protection in the national development programme.
- Create an inter-ministerial committee on social protection based in the Prime Minister's Office with action plans for each relevant ministry, including the Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity, Ministry of Work and Social Security, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Health.
- Assure budgetary provision and access to social protection (including health) by rural dwellers and those not covered by formal social insurance schemes.
- Create a national baseline data system to support the national social protection system, with data on age, gender, location and who key actors are.
- Review the budget for social protection (including cash transfers) in the light of demographics, vulnerability data and potential costs of national schemes.
- Ensure all categories of vulnerable groups have equitable access to health.
- Ensure legislation is in place to support social protection policies and support vulnerable groups, including children, women, older people, disabled people, youth and the unemployed.
- Greater collaboration on the development of social protection policy and strategies with civil society.

Rwanda

4 March 2008, Novo Hotel, Kigali

Key messages

- Commitment by the government to further social protection.
- Evidence of this commitment to be seen in national policies, strategies and laws to support implementation.
- Evidence of commitment by the donor community and partners to social protection is to be demonstrated by the alignment of their support to the government's strategic development plans which have social protection as a key component.

Recommendations

- Establish MINALOC as the institutional structure/ministry for the coordination of social protection in the country and invest in its capacity to undertake this role.
- Cultivate and strengthen the culture of information sharing by government as well as by civil society organisations in the country.

- Share the forthcoming mapping on social protection by MINALOC among all key stakeholders.
- Strengthen the delivery capacity of MINALOC from central to the decentralized levels through investment in its staffing, training, and equipment etc.
- Develop a comprehensive social protection strategy that outlines the implementation modality of social protection in the country.
- Support public awareness and education on social protection and the existing social protection schemes.
- Widely disseminate the Rwanda National Social Protection Strategy 2005 to create greater awareness and a common understanding among partners and stakeholders involved in social protection in the country.
- Strengthen targeting and selection criteria of vulnerable groups and harmonise the criteria being used by the different line ministries.
- Establish a management information system and strengthen monitoring and follow-up mechanisms of social protection activities in the country.
- Strengthen the involvement and participation of civil society organisations and private institutions and the public in the social protection debate in the country. Involve the target beneficiary in social protection policy development and implementation at every level.

Mozambique

10 March 2008, Joaquim Chissano International Conference Centre, Maputo

Messages and conclusions

- A shared vision between the different actors

This is a critical issue in order to influence national resource allocation. There is a need to change the discourse on social protection within government and civil society and to increase public understanding of the concepts in social protection. The emphasis in Mozambique needs to shift away from charity and expenditure towards rights and investment. The media can be a critical tool in creating this shift, as can civil society advocacy platforms and government communication. Opportunities need to be created to disseminate the rights of disadvantaged groups and avoid discrimination; explore and mitigate against factors affecting vulnerability; educate the public, donors, private sector, legislators and policy makers and communities about the concepts of social protection and existing rights. Studies need to focus on the multiplier effects and economic impacts of social protection in Mozambique, the results of which must be widely disseminated.

- Need for a global strategy for progressively introducing a costed minimum social security package for all

This process will include analysing the existing system for performance, cost and effectiveness; projecting the costs and impacts of new or modified social transfers, and identifying new and strengthening existing resource flows to social protection. This will support national discussion and policy definition. A new strategy would involve reviewing the way in which vulnerability is assessed to access social security benefits, balancing asset-based indicators of poverty with consumption-

based indicators. Finally it would involve excellent coordination between different actors to develop and maintain a common understanding/forecast of the numbers requiring and eligible for different types of social protection. Linked to this is the need for an excellent and comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation.

- Better implementation of existing programmes

Many policies and plans for social protection of vulnerable groups exist in Mozambique, but all suffer from poor levels of implementation. Major constraints are available resources and capacity within both government and in civil society. National resource allocation needs to give more emphasis to investment in the social sector in order to implement existing commitments and plans. Relevant laws need to be regulated for implementation (e.g. 4/2007) and the Government must prioritise social sector regulation equally with economic reforms in the annual legislative process.

- Develop capacity of actors in the field of social protection, both in terms of skills and resources.

Recognising the limited capacity of the state and civil society to deliver effective social protection and the enormous need of over 50 per cent of the population, we need to ensure that within the global social protection framework the burden of social protection for the most disadvantaged does not become the responsibility of the slightly less disadvantaged. We also need to ensure that the social protection measures adopted are sustainable, culturally appropriate and adequate to the needs and capacity of vulnerable households, without exerting intolerable stress on community and household coping capacities.

Sierra Leone

13 March 2008, Kimbima Hotel, Freetown

Messages

- Desire of the Republic of Sierra Leone to share information on design and implementation of social protection with other countries in West Africa.
- To have social protection included in the African Union Social Policy Framework.
- To have a cross-country learning process especially among the war-affected and fragile countries.

Recommendations

- Formulate a National Policy and Legal Framework on Social Protection in Sierra Leone.
- Agree a three-year National Strategic Plan on Social Protection with lessons learnt from the Social Safety Net Programme in Sierra Leone and examples from other countries in Africa, including an information dissemination strategy.
- Set up a National Task Force, Regional (West Africa) and Continental Coordinating Committees on Social Protection.
- Obtain support from development partners, including but not limited to, bilateral, multilateral institutions, Government of Sierra Leone, African Union, international NGOs and other stakeholders interested in social protection issues.

- Include social protection in peace and security and service delivery mechanisms.
- Set up an all-inclusive, rural participatory monitoring and evaluation scheme to oversee implementation.
- Submit the report of the workshop for inclusion in the development of the second generation of the implementation of the PRSP in Sierra Leone.

Cameroon

18 March 2008, Palais de Congres, Yaoundé

Recommendations

- To establish a Social Protection Observatory in Cameroon.
- To establish a Social Protection Observatory for Central Africa and the West African regions.
- To make healthcare more accessible to vulnerable groups by developing mechanisms that spread health risk.
- To integrate social protection into the second generation Poverty Reduction Strategy Document (PRSD), which is still being drafted.
- To set up a National Solidarity Fund.
- To put in place a social protection system accessible to all, taking into account the cost of living and the costs of basic social services.
- To harmonise the retirement age for the formal sector to at least 60 years.
- To agree a capacity-building programme for social protection with financial support for the vulnerable groups.
- To review the Social Development Strategy and ensure that social protection mechanisms are incorporated into it.

Tunisia

27-30 March 2008

Conclusions

Tunisia has promoted economic solidarity with a focus on improved living and working standards for all; in this way the country has made notable progress in reaching the Millennium Development Goals and in promoting decent work.

Social protection is a national priority and a clear objective in the national development plan. Social protection is promoted as it supports social stability, poverty reduction and socio-economic development of the citizen. Social protection contributes to strong growth and to development.

Recommendations

- To promote public and private investment in social protection.
- To prioritise the employment of young people to ensure universal and sustainable social protection programmes.
- To promote more national consultation between stakeholders and actors on social protection and undertake social monitoring.

- To support social protection for older people, and strengthen the role and support programmes of older people's groups and civil society.
- To promote civil society partnerships to manage effective social programmes that focus on social equality and sustainability.
- To promote social protection coverage for workers in the informal economy and strengthen awareness raising campaigns that target independent and agricultural workers.
- To improve inspection mechanisms for contributions by employer and employee.
- To improve social security provision by extending access for all and quality of service.
- To move forward on pension and health insurance reforms and ensure dialogue with key stakeholders.

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