



International Conference on
Social Protection
in contexts of
**Fragility &
Forced Displacement**

Brussels
28-29 September, 2017

Conference Report



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



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The conference in a nutshell

Humanitarian challenges of protracted fragility and conflict-related crises, larger than ever before, and the more recent unprecedented refugee movement around the globe underscore the need to break down the barriers between humanitarian and development work. Responsive long-term systems are needed to reach affected vulnerable populations consistently. Acute and extended crises have contributed to population flows that also highlight the need for long-term solutions in countries of destination. Over 65 million individuals were estimated to have been forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, generalised violence, or other human rights violations in 2015, representing an increase of almost six million compared to the previous year.

Over the last two decades, an increasing number of low- and middle-income countries worldwide have started to put social protection programmes in place, including cash transfers and linkages to access to basic goods and services. Extensive evidence demonstrates that social protection helps reduce poverty, inequality, and childhood deprivation and has long-term positive impacts on human capital development. The provision of direct income support to the poor and marginalised can, under certain circumstances, generate trust in the state and support for public institutions. Social protection can also unlock the productive potential of the poorest, increase local economic growth and micro-economic activity and even stimulate aggregate growth. When properly designed, social protection also has potential to decrease inequalities, for example, gender and geographic disparities. Social protection's contribution to the reduction of poverty and income inequality can diminish the likelihood of social unrest and thus better assures social peace. The combination of social and economic impacts is also seen as contributing to strengthening resilience: enhancing the capacity of poor households to cope, respond and withstand disasters better.

As part of those commitments under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1, the global community pledges to expand the coverage of social protection measures for all, and to achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable by 2030. This expansion must include scale up of social protection in contexts of fragility and forced displacement to ensure no one is left behind. Concomitantly, development actors recognised the importance of social protection at the [World Humanitarian Summit](#) (WHS) 2016, and committed through the [Grand Bargain](#) to “increase social protection programmes and strengthen national and local systems and coping mechanisms in order to build resilience in fragile contexts.” While establishing effective social protection in the context of protracted instability and displaced populations is more complex, experience suggests that it can and does play an important role both in humanitarian and developmental fronts—particularly in times of critical transitional junctures. Incremental adjustments to social protection provision have already helped countries such as Jordan and Lebanon respond to large displaced populations, and may provide lessons and roadmaps for others to pursue.

The objective of the conference was to shed new light on the prospects of using social protection systems in contexts of fragility and forced displacement, with the overall aim to better operationalize international commitments. The 2-day conference allowed rich and frank exchanges among stakeholders working on the same issues from different perspectives (research, policy and operations) and countries. Exchanging evidence, experiences, promising practices and achievements, as well as challenges and obstacles, helped gain a better understanding of key operational guiding considerations, as well as existing gaps and possible avenues of work (both in terms of research and policy) needed to address them. The high interest for the conference confirmed the commitment to bridging the humanitarian-development divide in contexts of protracted crises and working on forced displacement aspects.

This international conference is the result of collaborative efforts by a set of development [partners](#). UNICEF and the European Commission (Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations – DG ECHO, and the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development – DG DEVCO), organised this conference together with key partner United Nations agencies and governments including: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Germany (BMZ/GIZ), Sweden (Sida), Finland, the United Kingdom (UK aid), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Bank, and the World Food Programme (WFP).

The [Conference programme](#) was articulated around two themes, namely: effective social protection in contexts of protracted crises (day 1), and the needs of forcibly displaced populations and host communities, and the role of social protection (day 2). Across both themes, there was a strong focus on building synergies across the development and humanitarian divide, including lessons for governments, humanitarian and development actors, including donors. These issues were discussed through a mix of keynote speech, high-level panels, plenary and parallel sessions. In addition, speed networking sessions gave participants the opportunity to learn about a wide range of on-going activities, new research and knowledge products related to social protection in contexts of protracted crisis or forced displacement.

The international conference brought together over 220 participants from governments, international and bilateral organisations, civil society and research institutes from 40 countries to discuss concrete and technical implementation of the international commitments. Due to the high demand for the conference, ten sessions were livestreamed on [socialprotection.org](#). Conference participants discussed the potential of social protection systems in crises, including options to develop new and preserve as well as expand existing social protection systems in fragile contexts. They also explored the role of social protection to mitigate the impacts of mass displacement on host communities, while predictably meeting the needs of people forcibly displaced over the long-term. The conference contributed to the on-going discussions on the role of social protection in humanitarian and development programming and provided recommendations for implementing existing international commitments around “leaving no one behind” and working towards common outcomes in humanitarian and development programming. These conclusions are captured in the [Outcome Document](#) of the conference.

The present conference report complements the Outcome Document with conference session summaries. Additional materials produced out of the conference include: a set of [livestream recordings](#) available in English, French and Arabic; a set of [Country profiles](#) produced during the preparation of the conference; a set of key documents and videos on the topic gathered on the [Conference website](#); as well as a number of thematic articles based on interviews with participants filmed during the conference:

- [Expanding Turkey’s Social Protection Systems to Refugees](#)
- [From the ground up: The long road to social protection in Somalia](#)
- [Beyond cash transfers: Social protection in fragile contexts](#)
- [Partnership for Prospects: Helping Syrian refugees find employment in the Middle East](#)
- [Yemen: Community-based support in times of war](#)
- [Social protection and humanitarian actors: Q&A with Monique Pariat, Director-General of ECHO](#)

Conference session summaries

DAY 1 – 28 September 2017

1.1 WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Watch recording: [English](#) | [Français](#) | [العربية](#)

Introduction: **Sandie Blanchet**, Director, UNICEF Office for Relations with EU Institutions

Monique Pariat, Director General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)

Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, Director General, Department for Global Issues, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ)

Marjeta Jager, Deputy Director General, European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)

Ted Chaiban, Director, Programme Division, UNICEF

The challenges that need to be addressed are huge, larger than ever before. Inequalities are growing. Climate change is reshaping livelihood patterns of nations. After steadily declining for over a decade, global hunger is on the rise again, affecting about 11 per cent of the global population in 2016. Forced displacement, caused by protracted conflict and natural disasters, is witnessed on an unprecedented scale. There are 65 million people forcibly displaced in 2017, of which nearly 2 million are refugees—the highest number of forced displaced people since WWII. Even larger numbers are living in countries where on-going conflicts and complex political environments make everyday life challenging—families struggle to make a living, and governments struggle to provide services. Today, 250 million people are affected by humanitarian crisis globally. Crises have become more complex and more protracted: on average, 80 per cent of humanitarian crises last for 5 years or more (e.g. Syria, Iraq, South Sudan and Yemen).

The need for closer cooperation between humanitarian and development actors is more pressing than ever. The needs have outpaced everything that we had seen before, stretching our response capacity to the breaking point. If these issues are left unaddressed, it will set up a cycle of intergenerational transmission of poverty and insecurity, and generate global insecurity as a result. Humanitarian aid is not sufficient to address all these challenges. There is a need to work on more long-term solutions towards enhancing local capacities and building resilience. This requires humanitarian and development actors to engage together from the beginning, and join the humanitarian-development divide.

Social protection is a promising avenue for bridging the humanitarian-development nexus and addressing fragility and forced displacement in more predictable and effective ways. Social protection is a fundamental instrument, not only to tackle poverty and inequality, but also to help buffer crises and to recover more quickly from shocks that occur. Having strong risk-informed social protection systems able to respond to crises in a timely manner is crucial to building resilience but also to sustain the effects of humanitarian responses. Social protection is a tool to bridge silos to make stronger systems. Both humanitarian and development actors have been increasingly using cash transfers, a major social protection instrument, as an important tool for empowerment and transformation in contexts of fragility, a tool able to give choice, prevent negative coping mechanisms, and foster resilience. Cash transfers are even more effective when linked to social services (health, education, water provision, etc.) and work in conjunction. Of course, it is crucial to keep in mind that social protection encompasses many other valuable instruments, such as public works, social care services, social insurance, labour market policies, etc.

The value of social protection is acknowledged in a number of recent international commitments. The [ILO Recommendation concerning national floors of social protection](#) (No. 202, 2012) reaffirms the right to social protection for all. The [ILO Recommendation concerning employment and decent work for peace and resilience](#) (No. 205, 2017) recognizes the need to promote decent work, social protection and employment opportunities for refugees and host communities. The [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#) (2016) calls to improve the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance to those countries most affected and develop national strategies for the protection of refugees within the framework of national social protection systems, as appropriate. The [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (2015) and the [New European Consensus for Development](#) (2017) acknowledge social protection as a proven crosscutting instrument to combat poverty and inequality. As part of the commitments under [Sustainable Development Goal](#) (SDG) 1, the global community pledges to expand the coverage of social protection measures for all, and achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable by 2030. This expansion must include scale up of social protection in contexts of fragility and forced displacement, to ensure no one is left behind. Concomitantly, development actors recognized the importance of social protection at the [World Humanitarian Summit 2016](#), and committed through the [Grand Bargain](#) to “increase social protection programmes and strengthen national and local systems and coping mechanisms in order to build resilience in fragile contexts”—commitment 10(3).

The commitment to increase social protection in contexts of fragility and forced displacement is extremely challenging to implement. Major obstacles exist to reach tax-funded citizen-based social protection policies:

- In contexts of fragility, funding for and access to social services, including social protection, are often limited. This constitutes a challenge in ‘normal times’, and the extension of social protection in ‘crisis times’ represents an ever-greater challenge. In contexts of cross-border displacement, inequities between host and displaced populations can create tensions too.
- Humanitarian and development actors need to join forces to i) align recurrent humanitarian responses with national social protection systems where they exist, and adapt these systems so as to allow them to respond to needs in crises, and ii) where state-led social protection systems do not exist, to work in a manner that helps setup such systems while being mindful of the importance of ensuring affordability and financial sustainability, as well as the importance of transferring skills to build strong institutions.
- In contexts of fragility and forced displacement, humanitarian actors need to work with and/or help build national social protection systems while staying true to humanitarian principles. If the use of cash transfers is growing in scale in disasters as efficient, speedy and effective modality allowing quick, efficient and dignified responses,¹ they are often designed as short-term responses, not always connected to national social protection systems where they exist or efforts towards building such a national social protection system. To be more effective in contexts of protracted crises and forced displacement, humanitarian actors need to go beyond the ‘survival agenda’ and work with governments and their development partners to support longer-term needs—i.e. embedding humanitarian design on a thorough understanding of the broader context, and in particular, aligning humanitarian cash transfers with national systems.
- Currently we see a patchy picture in the field of resilience building, with, for instance, some tools being developed and promoted in humanitarian responses, and other tools emerging in the climate change sector (e.g. risk insurance). We are still largely missing a comprehensive view of whether/how we can build systems on the ground that are long standing, robust and deal with different types of crisis a country might face. This is the challenge ahead: connecting the dots for greater efficiency.
- The transformative nature of cash transfers is largely recognised. We are increasingly supporting them, trying to combine them with long lasting provision of social services to achieve longer-term results. We also need to support other valuable instruments (e.g. climate risk insurance). We need to pay careful attention to the choice of instruments—asking ourselves, for instance, if cash transfers are (the most)

¹ In 2016 ECHO provided more than half of its food assistance as cash transfers.

appropriate, and whether other social protection instruments can be considered and adapted to achieve humanitarian and long-term development purposes.

- Social protection has proven its effectiveness in helping build resilience, reduce poverty and inequality in rather ‘stable contexts’. Regarding fragility and forced displacement, we need to gather more data and evidence to see when, and what type of social protection we need in order to avert and mitigate the impact of humanitarian crises, contributing to achieve resilience, stabilization, peace and economic growth. This is a learning challenge for policy makers, practitioners, researchers, etc.

This conference is a timely opportunity to exchange experiences, share evidence and consider promising practices, with the aim to operationalize some of our international commitments. Through past and on-going experiences from protracted crises in the Middle East and emerging crises/fragilities in Africa, we have been learning about the potential of working with social protection systems and approaches in these contexts to respond to *and prevent* crises in the first place, and how humanitarian instruments can be incorporated—see for instance, experiences in Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nepal, Northern Iraq, Pakistan, The Philippines, Somalia, Turkey and Yemen, among others. The growth of unconditional cash transfers in humanitarian contexts also offers the prospect to strengthen nascent social protection systems. We thus have an opportunity to ensure that the expansion of social protection in contexts of fragility and forced displacement is informed by experience. A key expected outcome of this conference is to accelerate the operationalization of international commitments through social protection mechanisms, outlining commitments to action in priority countries.

1.2 KEY NOTE SPEECH

Watch recording: [English](#) | [Français](#) | [العربية](#)

Chair: **Dr Sarah Cook**, Director, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti

Keynote speaker: **Stefan Dercon**, Chief Economist, Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID)

Resilient social protection

We need to have resilient, credible social protection systems, something that exists and that continues to function in bad circumstances. Social protection can be defined as providing support to those at risk through transfers. If we really want to get benefits of social protection, it has to be credible. It requires systems that can continue to function despite all the risks that come with working in difficult places, systems that are actually functioning, that are continuing through the risks, through the years, through government changes, etc. Resilient social protection means ensuring that people at risk have credible, real social protection. Such an objective invites us to reflect on a series of questions: How to take away risks from those affected by shocks? How do we fulfil the ambition of shock-responsive risk-informed conflict-sensitive sustainable social protection systems? How can we start thinking about systems that survive the turmoil? How do we make these systems credible? How to make them resilient and continuous? Are we really doing social protection (i.e. helping build a resilient, credible system), or are we doing something that only looks like it (e.g. simply because we are using the same cards)?

Just emphasizing a rights-based approach to social protection is meaningless if it cannot be enforced. A legal statement does not mean it is credible, practically implementable (without commitment, capacity and funds). The key question is how enforceable, how credible is the legal framework? Embedding social protection in legislation gives credibility and sustainability, but enshrining in law means nothing in the contexts we are talking about, and in fact in many countries, where law is not enforced. This is not in any sense sufficient. Rather good practice will attract law.

The interest for social protection in contexts of fragility and forced displacement is evidence-informed. On the one hand, there is a wealth of evidence that adverse shocks cause poverty: a third of poverty can be associated by these adverse events (Dercon et al. 2005); loss of assets, negative coping mechanisms, etc. have long-term consequences leading to long-term poverty (Barrett and Carter 2013, Dercon 2014); stunting generates a loss of health and human capital (Dercon and Porter 2014); etc. On the other hand, a strong evidence base shows that

social protection can work in ‘normal places’ to address poverty; it helps poor and vulnerable people handle shocks, protecting consumption and building assets, health and livelihoods.

Social protection is one of few examples where research meets practice, but evidence is still thin in contexts of fragility and forced displacement. In recent years, there has been an evidence-based expansion of social protection ‘normal, stable places’. In difficult places, a set of recent research studies show that it is possible to generate good quality, rigorous evidence on humanitarian programmes in difficult environments. However, the emerging evidence in contexts of fragility and forced displacement is not necessarily sufficient to support the kind of consensus that is emerging among practitioners—e.g. the preference for cash transfers over support to other essential services is not yet supported by evidence. So, it is good to keep on experimenting, testing bits and piece. But we also need to treat small pilots with caution, e.g. can they withstand pressures?

It is important not to mistake “doing good things” that look a bit like social protection as social protection. We need to reflect as humanitarians and think carefully about what we are doing: Are we really doing social protection or are we doing something that only looks like it (e.g. simply because we are using cash transfers or using the same beneficiary cards)? We should not get distracted by ‘quasi systems’ that look a bit like social protection but lack the long term and breadth of social protection benefits (e.g. projects funded and delivered by international actors). Rather, we need to ask ourselves how to turn nice ideas about social protection into resilient systems that provide credible social protection.

Building resilient systems able to offer credible social protection is challenging in difficult environments; it calls for a realistic approach defined around clear priorities. The very promise of a social protection approach in fragile and conflict-affected settings, as opposed to traditional humanitarian practice, is to offer a systemic approach, well targeted, catalysing the collaboration with development partners, with the prospect to include both the displaced as well as host communities and the locals. To date, successful cases of social protection share the following characteristics: commitment by stable, functioning national and local governments, which seek legitimacy by reaching previously politically excluded people; there are some forms of accountability; and there are functioning sectors to complement social protection measures (such as, health, education, as well as livelihoods). These conditions are often not met in contexts of fragility and forced displacement, where often: there are local and national political conflicts, the government seeks legitimacy through violence and oppression; there are fragile national systems; there is leakage, corruption and rent seeking; there are poor social sectors and limited livelihood opportunities. In such contexts, we shouldn’t expect to see all the benefits of social protection for complementary services need to be functioning to bring greatest benefits. So how to develop systems that can function, that can deliver some good rate of return, in such ‘messy’ conditions? If we want to build such systems, we need to sort out much more clearly who is responsible over the long term, that is, who we are going to work with in these contexts? We need to find these and work with them and begin to build these long-term systems.

There is a value in thinking like an insurance company to design credible social protection systems. Three aspects need to be carefully considered, and key questions need answering, in order to get a resilient social protection system:

1. **Decision-making:** What risk do we take on? Who is taking on the risk? What will trigger payouts? Who needs to respond, to set up the system, to act on the triggers? The issue of risk ownership is key—national government, local government, receiving government, and/or international community? It needs to be sorted out before the crisis hits. This is an aspect that often remains unaddressed. But delaying making decisions of who is in charge (at global, national, local levels) causes delays in the response. For instance, during the Ebola crisis, it was known already in February 2015 that something was going to happen, but no one took ownership, among humanitarian actors and within government. It was unclear who was responsible.
2. **Preparedness investment:** How will we make sure we can respond as promised? We need to know ahead of time how to respond i.e. invest in systems and human resources, planning and coordination. This is an

aspect that often goes wrong due to poor planning and coordination. For instance, in Nepal, lots of money was pledged and raised in November but the disbursement plan was not clarify until December.

3. **Credible, pre-agreed financing plan:** How will we make sure that we can finance all contingencies? How will those who own the risk and have the systems be able to actually act i.e. finance the contingencies/responses? We need credible risk financing plans and systems. This is an aspect that often goes wrong. But it is not possible to establish a credible, predictable, long-term system that is financed based on emergency appeals after a crisis hits. Appeals are medieval, like begging bowls. Having multiple donors often cause strategic delays. Crying wolf damages credibility. There is often poor coordination—everyone pushing for its vested interests/visibility, and poor information sharing and transparency.

To some extent, these three principles are to be treated together in an iterative manner. It may be difficult to have a conversation on credible systems without credible financing, but financing often becomes possible when there is a clear plan, so things come together. The suggested approach to get started is: be clear on what risk you want to take on; be clear on what you want to do, with a plan; and then look for financing, develop a financing plan.

There are a few good examples to consider:

- Mexico's FONDEN is a model in decision-making and finance, with a clear contingency plan and disaster risk financing. There is a budget process to ensure funding for recovery after natural disasters, with allocations every year. There is clarity on who owns the risk, with pre-agreed rules between federal and local government on what is covered, how and when. There are incentives for risk reduction. It is financed by regular budget contributions, re-insured with catastrophic bonds (set up earlier this year) and re-insurance policies.
- [Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme](#) can be regarded as a state-of-the-art scheme in that regard. It is a nationally owned programme that provides cash transfers to the poorest in Turkana. It has a clear objective for emergency responses and clear triggers. There is clear information on who are on the scheme in normal times, and who will be benefiting in a disaster— others are offered insurance. It is underwritten by an index insurance policy and can rely on donor commitment (DFID). These aspects make it a credible instrument to support the poorest in normal times and assist those affected by disasters.

A number of lessons can be drawn on how to translate this in contexts of fragility and forced displacement:

- **Preparedness in a crisis is too late; it is crucially important to plan ahead, before the crisis hits.** This requires: ensuring that humanitarians work with development actors; ensuring work on coordinated systems, preferably with government, in ways that make systems able to function in a crisis and to be scaled up; working on building data and knowledge on the vulnerable that can be used across long-term and crisis contexts and be handed over when things fall apart; and agreeing who owns the risk. Coordination is key. There is no point in establishing parallel pseudo-social protection programmes without connecting them to state-led efforts; they fall apart during crises. Rather, there is a need to coordinate from the beginning.
- **When the crisis is upon us and there is no system in place yet, we need to be realistic on what we are doing in these places.** Where the crisis is already there, there is often a lack of interest from multi- and bi-lateral development donors. Yet, we want to build a nationally owned system. Let's be honest about what is achievable. What is the space for us to engage, and what is possible? Can we set up some sort of emerging, nascent system, and what are the potential opportunities for building on this/expanding it/moving it on in the future? Who to engage with? What systems to use? What design parameters (targeting methods, transfer sizes, etc.) to adopt? How to do it is often much clearer in a natural hazards context.

- **Experimentation is good, and part of preparedness.** So let's try, let's test. For instance, the use of new technologies (e.g. for mobile banking) is making lots possible. Let's just be careful how we call it—not all of these experimentations will be classifiable as 'social protection', even in an embryonic form. And let's try to design a model in a way that it can be handed over. Models tested in pilot projects are often too expensive to be taken over and expanded.
- **In difficult settings, social protection is not a silver bullet.** Returns from social protection will often come from the complementarities with other sectors—e.g. in Lebanon and Jordan, displaced populations need the cash transfer scheme but also the hope of an economic livelihood and access to essential services. There is a need to do more than vocational training—something that is not 'active labour market policies' per se but more than 'cash-for-work'.
- **There are specific issues to pay attention to in conflict settings, such as mental health issues.** Which services can we complement cash transfers with—e.g. services for trauma, psychological support? Let's complement cash transfers with low-cost behavioural activation. 'Cash plus'² is not same thing in contexts of fragility and forced displacement compared to more stable environments—e.g. vocational training is not going to cut it; mental health/psychosocial support is needed.
- **Government ownership is needed, but the risk also needs to be underwritten by the international community to get these things off the ground.**
- **A social protection system creates a contingent liability, and any liability needs an appropriate financing plan.** An appropriate financing plan is needed to ensure the system retains credibility. For example, it may be a good idea to plan to expand a pension scheme to younger ages in crisis times, but finances needs to be in place for that i.e. a contingency budget line is needed. In that respect, humanitarian agencies cannot retain the risk. Humanitarian appeals are no sound strategy to manage liabilities. In some cases (e.g. displacement insurance) market based products may work (risk transfer). It requires pre-committed financing of needs (e.g. by donors such as DFID in the case of Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme). Working out who will get it and contingent liability requires clearly defined social protection plans.

1.3 HIGH-LEVEL PANEL 1

Watch recording: [English](#) | [Français](#) | [العربية](#)

Moderator: **Jean-Louis De Brouwer**, Director of Europe, Eastern Neighbourhood and Middle East, European Commission's Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)

Judith, Refugee from Rwanda

Oleksandra Churkina, Deputy Minister of Social Policy for European Integration, Ministry of Social Policy, Ukraine

Florence Nakiwala Kiyingi, Minister of State for Youth and Children Affairs, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda

Dr Göran Holmqvist, Director, Department for Asia, Middle East and Humanitarian Assistance, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Challenges, experiences and potential of social protection in contexts of fragility and forced displacement

Developing and working towards a long-term vision is key. Setting up social protection programmes and systems takes decades. Support in contexts of fragility and long-term crisis need similar timeframes in mind. We need to start thinking outside the box. For humanitarians, it means moving from assistance to solidarity, and working towards a long-term vision and sustainability. Ukraine and Uganda are two countries where such a long-term vision has been developed to reinforce the national social protection system, faced with systemic challenges, while dealing with internally displaced populations in one case and with refugee influx in the other.

The Ukrainian system of social protection is forced to cope with old and new challenges in very difficult times. Ukraine, a middle-income country, has a relatively good social protection system, which has nonetheless missed

² 'Cash plus' programmes complement cash payments with additional inputs, services, and linkages to other services in order to more effectively achieve successful outcomes and ensure long-term sustainability.

reform opportunities in the past 15 years. Today, it is confronted to a number of new and emerging challenges, including high numbers (1.5 million) of internally displaced people (IDPs), a situation that can create community tensions. The increased number of vulnerable households cannot access sufficient employment. Social benefits, including regular subsidies, contributed 35 per cent of household income in 2015-2016. IDPs face numerous challenges. Host communities often do not have enough capacity and resources to respond to IDP needs. There are cases of social exclusion from services by some host communities. Access to services is problematic for people living in areas outside of government control. Lack of employment opportunities is critical issue for IDPs.

The Ukrainian government has taken transitional steps to address pressing issues. To support IDPs, the government introduced a complex multisectoral national programme to support the integration IDPs into communities. IDP-oriented responses are integrated into existing regular social protection programmes, with adjustments and privileges (e.g. prioritised access to services). The government response has included the introduction of a special cash transfer scheme (covering rental subsidies and utility expenses, and representing 10 per cent of all social cash transfer budget) and a housing programme (50 per cent of the costs of apartments/houses are covered by the state budget). Legal amendments were drafted to simplify access to pension for IDPs, re-establishing the pension right including the payment of any accumulated debt). The government has received significant support from humanitarian and development partners, as well as volunteers, to assist Eastern Ukraine and IDPs.

The next task is to make transitional steps towards more sustainable reforms able to make integrated social protection a reality. The government's vision towards integrated social protection is based on the following principles: solidarity (i.e. social protection cannot be based only on particular needs/groups, it needs to include all those in social relationship); subsidiarity (empowering the autonomy and potential capacities of people, undertaking only those initiatives that exceed the capacity of individuals); inclusion; and service integration. An integrated social protection system is to help effectively and sustainably address the whole spectrum of complex (old, new and upcoming) social protection issues—even if not a silver bullet. In this vision, integration happens: at an individual level through case management; at a service level through sub-national social planning and institutional cooperation; at a public finance management level; at the level of data management (statistics, administrative data, unified databases); at a physical level (“one window or there is no wrong door”); at the level of policies and programmes within and beyond social protection.

In this vision, the role of the central government will remain important (notably at a policy level) but local governments are becoming critical actors of the integrated system. In that regard, the on-going territorial reform and decentralisation represents a unique opportunity. The objectives of decentralisation and integrated social protection reforms are mutually reinforcing.

The issue of social workers and case management is key to this whole area; but it is an area of limited capacity in normal times. There is a lack of trained social workers compared to the size of needs. The government has embarked on a programme of training and recruitment of social workers. To accelerate the reform agenda in social protection in Eastern Ukraine, the government is also learning from humanitarian experiences. The integrated data management system for case management (e.g. in Mariupol city in Eastern Ukraine) is an example of humanitarian-development integration. This information technology (IT) system allows making the cases online through tablets; it integrates all the required forms, including needs assessment, documenting progress made and report to the centralized database.

In Uganda, the Ministry in charge of children affairs has the vision to develop a child support grant scheme for both refugees and Ugandan citizens over the next 25 years. Uganda has the fastest growing refugee population in the world, with one million refugees from South Sudan in the last three years. Uganda has an open-door refugee policy; it hosted the [Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees](#) in June 2017. There are four main refugee camps, and high rates of insecurity around the camps, due to tensions between refugee and host communities. Climate change is affecting the local populations, making them vulnerable too and unable to offer support to

refugees. Children represent 61 per cent of the refugee population in Uganda, and 58 per cent of the total Ugandan population. Multidimensional poverty affects 55 per cent of children under five and 38 per cent of children aged 6-17. In this context, the Ugandan government is now looking at establishing a child-sensitive social protection system for all families with children, both refugee and local families. Such a system could be used to strengthen the resilience of populations to shocks – be they climatic or other. Social protection is seen as a key strategy to respond to school dropout and to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

The Ugandan government is looking for a sustainable financing system to set this up over the next 25 years.

Uganda launched a social protection investment case in 2016 to expand social protection. It has shown good results. For instance, the evaluation of the senior citizens allowance (providing US\$6 a month to households with senior citizens in 15 districts) showed that the school enrolment rate tripled, the rate of households having two meals or more per day doubled, the employment rate increased by 50 per cent, and the higher minimum wage was multiplied by four. Simulations were done for the expansion of various schemes, including the senior citizen allowance, a disability allowance, a health insurance scheme, and a child support grant. All resulted in positive impact and acceleration in poverty reduction, notably the child support grant. So the Ugandan government is now proposing a universal grant in the form of a US\$6 monthly child allowance for all children under the age of two. Such a scheme would be expected to reduce the national poverty rate by 28 per cent. The Uganda government is looking at developing an endowment fund to draw resources from different sources, including national budget, mobile money from diaspora, development partners and foundations, and social impact investors (private sector, oil financing). It is trying to develop key partnerships with the US, UK, etc. with a view to setup a pilot project in the North-West of the country, in the region where 99 per cent of children live in poverty, which is also the region where refugees from South Sudan are living. An estimated US\$2.6 billion is needed to start the pilot and sustain a universal child grant over the long term.

The Ugandan system of providing both land and economic opportunities for the refugee population is quite unique and should be duplicated elsewhere. This is needed for long-term resilience. Many beneficiaries are women, children and elderly. We need to develop a system to deliver social stipends over the longer term, particularly for those who are unable to work, within the refugee and local populations. The Ugandan government places a lot of efforts on security in and around the refugee camps. Currently, assistance in camps tends to be in the form of in-kind goods and services. But incorporating a cash component appears important so what is within the camp look similar to outside, and people can feel at home.

Humanitarian cash transfers show good results but they have limits. Interviewees with refugees receiving cash transfers through the World Food Programme in northern Uganda were encouraging: cash is being delivered well; complain mechanisms are in place; markets are working well and developing as a result of cash transfers; beneficiaries confirm a preference for cash over food (food is more likely to get stolen whereas cash can be hidden). Difficulties identified concern the strategies for phasing out the cash transfers. Today, beneficiaries get US\$8 per person per month for three years, then US\$4 for two years, then no support after five years. This illustrates the severe underfunding of the humanitarian system. The World Food Programme is facing similar constraints with in-kind food rations. The exit strategy should be there from day one when we enter a crisis. Humanitarian and development actions should not be seen as sequential interventions, but both development and humanitarian interventions should be there throughout the crisis response.

Cash alone cannot resolve all protection issues in humanitarian settings. We want to see the scaling up of multipurpose cash grants (MPGs) to meet multiple needs in a flexible way. We are also impatient to see the United Nations' system deliver (MPGs and complementary services) as one.

Progress has been made towards bridging the humanitarian-development divide, but it remains challenging. Humanitarian and development actors are increasingly joining forces. There are emerging good examples, but this is still quite challenging. Humanitarian instruments are restricted by the humanitarian mandate, and can only

adapt so far. It is primarily up to long-term development actors to adjust their mind set and thinking, and help close the gaps. The humanitarian system needs to remain close to its mandate for funding reasons.

More efforts are needed to bridge the research-to-policy divide. This area remains under-researched. There is a need for more research on contextual factors, cash plus aspects, phasing out strategies, synergies with services, etc. Humanitarian settings do present methodological challenges for researchers but there are effective ways for establishing high-quality evidence in humanitarian settings. We should make sure that some of the funding allocated to building systems goes to strengthening the evidence base. We should be patient because research takes time, and we should be open-minded and take our time to absorb findings when they don't tell us what we want.

1.4 PARALLEL SESSIONS 1

Read parallel session concept notes on pp. 11-12 of the [Conference programme](#)

1.4.1 PARALLEL SESSION 1A

Watch recording: [English](#) | [Français](#) | [العربية](#)

Chair: **Dominique Burgeon**, Director of Emergency and Rehabilitation Division and Strategic Programme Leader – Resilience, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Minister Maryan Qasim, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Somalia

Ric Goodman, Director for Resilience, DAI Europe

Chris Porter, Humanitarian Head of Profession, Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom

Joseph Chege, Food Security Specialist, Office of Food for Peace, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) East Africa

Designing, implementing and effectiveness of social protection systems in contexts of protracted crises

To discuss feasibility and modalities for setting up a national social protection system in contexts of fragility and protracted crises, this session zooms in on the case of Somalia, looking at the current situation and what is being proposed. There is now a clear political will from the Somali government to transition from short-term emergency response towards a longer-term poverty reduction strategy, and a recognition that this requires working on social protection, which is included as a pillar in the framework of the National Development Plan 2017-2019. We need to take stock of the experiences from the government and key partners, and understand how partners can collectively support the state and other actors in these efforts.

The government of Somalia expresses its gratitude to all development and humanitarian partners supporting the country to avert a famine. As per the motivations of the government for pursuing social protection:

- **The Somali context:**
 - Since 1991, Somalia has faced varying degrees of instability, armed conflict and recurrent important droughts. The context is complex with urban, rural, nomadic and displaced populations. The majority of the population is poor (69 per cent live below the poverty line). The population is very young population – 50 per cent are under 15 and 75 per cent are under 30. Two thirds are unemployed. Environmental shocks, armed conflict, poor governance, marginalization and chronic poverty are the main drivers of vulnerability.
 - Transitional Government was established from 2004 to 2012. In 2012, Federal Government was re-established, which marked a shift in the political and institutional environment and the beginning of the transition to rebuild state institutions. Elections were organised in 2016. The Cabinet sworn in March 2017.
 - Currently the country is in a pre-famine response. The previous famine of 2011 resulted in the deaths of 250,000 people, over half were children;
 - There is a strong political will to move forward, to address the situation of chronic poverty and vulnerability.

- **Why Social Protection now in Somalia:**
 - Historically social protection is a key aspect of Somali society. Informal community mechanisms (such as, the *Sadaqa*, exchange of animals, which allow rich households to support poor households) are traditionally the first line of response at times of crisis. It is a key part of the social contract in developing trust between state and citizens.
 - An opportunity to build formal social protection in Somalia exists and will give the possibility to: rebuild the social contract and trust between the government and the population; bridge the humanitarian-development divide; and reduce vulnerability and root causes of poverty. Social protection shifts the focus to the root causes of poverty and vulnerability, away from reactive, cyclical short-term support.
- **Social protection is included in Somalia’s National Development Plan 2017-2019:**
 - The national development plan (NDP) is the first since 1986. It lays out the short- to medium-term strategic direction, development priorities and proposed implementation mechanisms in order to achieve socioeconomic transformation.
 - Social protection is included under the 6th pillar “Building national resilience capacity.” Within this pillar there is a Social Protection Working Group – social protection is a priority under this pillar. It shows the clear commitment and role of Government for Social protection.
- **With the new Federal Government, a lot has been done during those last five years:**
 - **Policy** – A consultative process to draft a National Social Protection Policy framework is underway with support of the Italian Cooperation. A Disaster Management Policy was drafted, including a plan to set up a Disaster Management Fund and develop national capacities.
 - **Humanitarian support** – Approximately 2.5 million Somalis are currently being assisted with humanitarian support each month in response to the drought. Humanitarian actors are increasingly using conditional or unconditional cash transfers as an effective modality for support, particularly in areas with access constraints.
 - **Coordination** – Pillar Working Groups facilitate coordinated action by government, donors, humanitarian, development and private sector partners towards the NDP. Social protection is coordinated under a specific Sub-Working Group of the Resilience Pillar Working Group.
 - **Informal social protection** – Approximately US\$1.4 billion per year in remittances from the 2-million Somali Diaspora plays a significant role in community support. Remittances make up approximately 24 per cent of Somalia’s Gross Domestic Product. Child and youth poverty has been shown to be substantially lower in households receiving remittance support.
 - **Definition** – A definition of social protection for Somalia was developed, where protection from shocks is highlighted. Formal social protection is defined as follows: “Government-led policies and programmes which address predictable needs throughout the life cycle in order to protect all groups, and particularly the poor and vulnerable, against shocks, help them to manage risks, and provide them with opportunities to overcome poverty, vulnerability, and exclusion.” Addressing the root causes of poverty, risk and vulnerability, social protection is expected to contribute to poverty reduction, social cohesion and inclusion, and economic growth as part of a cost-effective, sustainable, and comprehensive national system.
- **How to move forward?**
 - There are significant needs while limited resources and capacity exist. Consequently, there is a strong effort needed to prioritize support to the most vulnerable populations.
 - Four pillars to build a national social protection system have been identified: secure buy-in at all levels for political commitment; build and transfer knowledge and capacity; link and build on humanitarian

support to move toward something more long term and integrated; and explore national and long-term financing strategies to sustain a national social protection system, including pooled and harmonized funding from development and humanitarian donors.

- As per the developed roadmap, the next steps are: seeking to transition from short-term emergency responses to long-term predictable safety nets that are shock responsive; developing the policy framework; increasing capacity; developing targeting system to identify the vulnerable; testing methods (common platforms, management information systems, delivery mechanisms, etc.); institutionalising through coordination, cross-sector linkages and sustainable financing.

- **Request to development partners:**

- Humanitarian support is not enough and social protection is essential. To give an image, humanitarian aid is like a medicine that reduces the temperature of a patient only (alleviating the symptoms), while social protection provides the real cure to the deep roots of the disease (addressing chronic poverty and vulnerability).
- Somalia has developed a clear national development plan, which includes social protection. The call is for all partners to align with the national development plan in their response and coordinate together to help build/support/strengthen a national social protection system.

- **Key messages to take home include:**

- Strong political will is essential to build a formal social protection system;
- Efforts to build a formal social protection system should be pursued, even if needs are greater than the existing financial capacities;
- Alignment of partners to the efforts of the Somali Government is essential (along the National development Plan);
- It is necessary to save lives and livelihoods.

A recent study, commissioned by the European Commission, offers a diagnosis and identifies opportunities to build on current humanitarian assistance to move towards more longer-term and sustainable assistance in line with a safety net approach. Stakeholder consultations with government and development/humanitarian partners took place in September 2017 to come up with some preliminary recommendations for how to improve upon/create entry points for safety nets. These revealed the following.

- **There is great momentum for this from all partners**, especially since the 2015 drought episode. Key enablers include: a strong political commitment from the government; desire at country level and donor headquarters; coordination mechanisms that are now in place as a result of the 2016-17 crisis response and managed to avert famine.
- **However, there is still a considerable fragmentation of programmes and approaches, and evidence of poor coordination on all sides**, including an important disconnect between Mogadishu (where the Federal Government sits) and Nairobi (where United Nations agencies are based), and communication and coordination challenges between donors and implementing partners, and between Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and United Nations.
- **There is discontent from beneficiaries:** At local level, there are still issues related to the access to social protection. Programming is challenging; activities are generally delegated to third parties/local partners for implementation, targeting and monitoring and evaluation through community-based systems. But, with limited resources/systems to deal with poverty this means that in practice a small minority receives benefits and there are large exclusion errors – at the discretion of community leadership and deeply problematic. This has driven a perception in communities of unfairness and corruption within aid actors (international and also national).

- **This raises questions of how to use state-provided safety nets as both a poverty alleviation tool and a political instrument** – building national systems in order to build citizen trust in government, to reinforce a social contract, to create a sense of national identity for all vulnerable citizens, and to support social cohesion. Peru is a case to illustrate this point.
- **A national social protection system should provide different responses to the different needs of the population.** Cash is not enough; livelihood support and access to essential services are necessary. An ideal typology is proposed to move towards a more integrated system, with appropriate support along a continuum. For each type of vulnerability (related to food security or not) and response (protective or promotive), different types of programmes are suggested in order to cover all layers/levels of poverty/vulnerability:
 - Promotive (asset accumulation):
 - Food secure: market systems development, labour skills and vocational training, credit, micro-insurance;
 - Seasonally food insecure: seasonal transfers, plus support for productive activity (for instance, public works, household income-generating activities, savings, school feeding);
 - Protective (asset stabilisation):
 - Chronically food insecure: predictable shock-responsive transfers, plus productive activity;
 - Chronically vulnerable: long-term transfers and social welfare services.
 - Alongside this, the parallel existence/development of other essential services (water, health, nutrition, education) is a must to realise the benefits of this and ensure impacts on beneficiaries.
- **We need to plan, think, finance, monitor at a national scale.** In terms of processes and building blocks, other requirements for building national social protection systems are needed, including:
 - Better institutional/coordination mechanisms to establish regular dialogue between the Somali government and donors/partners – these are not donor programmes; the main goal of development partners’ work should be to support the government in developing Somalia’s system.
 - Better coordination among donors – In Somalia, the creation of a Donor Coordination Team (DCT) would be useful to act as a clearinghouse to agree with the Somali government on key decisions. This proved extremely useful in Ethiopia in developing the Productive Safety Net Programme. It could take an implementation support and technical assistance role with United Nations, NGOs and donors. A DCT would work with the Somali government to oversee the strategic planning and process of creating a national system from the high-level government function to the detailed technical implementation issues, so that increasingly implementation happens more uniformly. Food security and shock surveillance needs to be moved towards the Somali Disaster Management Agency (SoDMA) and capacity built.
 - Involvement of additional institutions to develop a regulatory environment, including:
 - Regulations of mobile money with the central bank – currently cash provision is very informal;
 - Establishment of a national registry/ID card system (in the short term, just need a functional system; but in longer term needs to be formalized) to be used for social protection, but also for elections, in order to ensure the potential interoperability between registries. The social registry needs to be unified, and led by the national Government, and should follow the security/protection of data laws and regulations;
 - Development of a unique approach for the country – A set of standards needs to be set to harmonize the different social protection approaches, building on controlled experimentation to provide evidence for what to scale up (e.g. transfer amounts, triggers for scale-up, vulnerability targeting vs. poverty targeting, and access to household demographic data surveys).

- A constructive approach with third parties (involved in delivery, monitoring and evaluation, and targeting) – this is essential to drive up programme quality and resolve neglected issues (e.g. exclusion errors, access and lack of monitoring/impact data, delegated community-based targeting).
 - A national plan to frame those different aspects and to make the response predictable, coordinated, funded and based on clear analysis of the situation – Several components (such as policy, household survey data, ID function, management information system/registry, monitoring and evaluation, plan/finance, standard operating procedures) need to be developed on behalf of government requirements and owned by them, but then implementing partners could work under these harmonized frameworks. Within this, we could still try and test and innovate.
 - All those requirements can build/develop national social protection system, as they refer to the three points of Stefan Dercon (see section 1.2): setting the owner of the risks (clear responsibility); financial capacities; and strong political will.
- **Key messages to take home include:**
 - A national social protection system should provide different responses to the different needs of the population;
 - Cash is not enough; livelihood support as access to essential services are necessary;
 - Closer coordination between Government and partners is a must, as other building elements need to come together to reinforce/create social protection systems.

From a humanitarian donor point of view,

- **Why we should do this:**
 - The response in Somalia has cost US\$1.1 billion response so far; this is just not sustainable. The number and scale of crisis are increasing, but the pot of humanitarian funding is not – with constantly limited resources for humanitarian response. This trend questions the financial sustainability of humanitarian response face to an increasing number of crises.
 - The enormous effort made by everyone alleviated famine in Somalia, but the situation is still hugely challenging. As a response, investing in nascent formal social protection system, from now could: better support the resilience of population and mitigate/reduce the effects/impacts of shocks and risks; and make the response to crisis cheaper and affordable for the future. In future crises, with such a system as outlined above, we could have i) a more resilient population; ii) a cheaper mechanism for response; and iii) a more effective (quicker) way to reach people at scale.
 - In that ideal scenario, no important humanitarian efforts will be needed. In Ethiopia, for instance, the Productive Safety Net Programme has had a huge impact on the overall reduction of food gap. Realistically, we would probably still need some complementary humanitarian response activity but having such a mechanism could significantly improve things.
- **What are the main common challenges/bottlenecks:**
 - We don't entirely know the challenges that we will face. We are still experimenting this approach; we are still trying things and need more evidence.
 - In Somalia, there is a stronger government now and a clear plan. But this is not the case in many other places. As donors/development partners, how do we work to begin these sorts of things in contexts where there is no medium-term possibility of an end point/government ownership?
 - A strong political commitment from donor countries is essential, but this is not always the case when we face major humanitarian crises. How do we convince donor-country taxpayers that it is still a good thing to do? Yes, there is an ethical message about helping people. But there also need to be a Value-for-Money argument – establishing that this is still a better way of doing business.

- We cannot develop proper ‘social protection’ in all contexts (where there is a very fragile/no strong government/no government buy-in, etc.) but something that ‘smells a bit like social protection’ can still be progress in the right direction. We need to be realistic about our priorities and objectives – is it a state building agenda or about getting better assistance to people?
 - There are hard decisions to be made, trade-offs and compromises – on targeting, payment mechanisms, and transfer values. We need to leave agendas and egos at the door. We should have no favoured instruments, targeting methods, etc. and be ready to compromise. Essentially: do we go big from the beginning of the design, opting for a more complex design and building in a shock-responsive capacity, or do we keep it simple, getting the basics up and running first? Having a complex system may be more efficient but is especially difficult in places where capacity is lacking (in government and in civil society).
 - Importantly, we need to build resilient social protection systems. For instance, Yemen is still using the Social Welfare Fund and social registry, developed before the current armed conflict, for the response to the ongoing crisis.
 - Building resilient/more sustainable social protection systems means that it should be, as much as feasible, built on/aligned with existing traditions and existing informal forms of social protection.
 - Institutional interests and mandates need to come second. The government expects objective advice that gets behind their development plan. But what about contexts where government leadership is less strong? Can donors get together and create space for dialogue? And can we develop not a 1-2 year plan, but a 10-year plan minimum?
 - There are huge issues of human capacity for humanitarians/development partners to drive this forward. Often, as in the case of South Sudan, there is willingness but no capacity to engage and drive forward (humanitarian actors are engaging in the response; development actors are not really on the ground as much). This is a mistake as ensuring the development of Government capacities during any humanitarian responses is essential to build nascent social protection systems. Can we develop a group that can engage across institutions to support this?
 - Cash transfers alone won’t make people resilient. The [REFANI](#) project shows that cash is insufficient by itself to tackle wasting; it is necessary to have the health linkages too. Providing complementary support to the delivery of cash-based transfers is necessary, that is, a ‘cash-plus approach’ with support to livelihoods and access to basic services.
 - The establishment of nascent formal social protection systems is not a linear process and takes time. In easier contexts, it takes already 10-15 years – in Kenya, the Hunger Safety Net programme has taken 10 years to get to the point of ‘shock response’ and scale. However, there is a great momentum to build those systems now as there is a strong political commitment in many fragile countries. We need to be realistic about how long it takes, we need to engage in the long term, and we still need to be ambitious.
- **Key messages to take home include:**
 - Political will and leadership is necessary/essential;
 - Development of local human capacities is important during the humanitarian response;
 - Building nascent social protection systems takes time and should be planned accordingly.
 - Nascent social protection systems should build on informal forms of social protection.

Cash-based interventions can be used as a catalyst to support livelihood and long-term social development in fragile contexts, as experienced by USAID, which is a key player in Somalia for famine and social cohesion. In Somalia, USAID funds the most important programme to support the response to the different crisis – famine and drought, in order to protect livelihood and needs of Somali people. US\$50 million have been spent to respond

to the acute food insecurity of 2 million people, in a fast and effective manner, through cash-based interventions (CBI).

- There is extensive experience in humanitarian cash-based interventions in Somalia. CBI have also been used to reduce vulnerability and develop livelihoods, notably through two ongoing programmes in Somalia:
 - Famine prevention through **cash-for-work** activities, which aim at rehabilitating productive assets for drought-affected communities in order to protect their livelihoods. This programme also helped and enabled rural communities to keep having social interactions and cohesion. The cash helps communities to remain in their location, not to displace on account of the crisis, to maintain the social ties, which are important coping mechanisms. Without this programme, the level of forced displacement could have been higher.
 - **Cash+ interventions:** It is a very innovative response and has provided unconditional cash transfers, complemented by farm inputs and fishing kits to 240,000 beneficiaries. This programme is a critical support for rural communities, as households can be generally more resilient and autonomous – they can feed themselves and two additional families for six months. Cash+ interventions also stimulate local markets/economies.
- CBI are found to be effective in meeting immediate needs, and can also address underlying vulnerabilities. CBI have brought different positive benefits, including on: health, education, food security and nutrition, reducing displacement, creating work opportunities, avoid selling assets and development of productive assets for higher productivity and livelihood diversification. All those elements contribute to resilience building.
- Development partners and the government do not start from scratch. Important programmes are already in place, while previous crisis gave additional experience to stakeholders for scaling up operations, when necessary (even without a national ID system, for instance). In fact, opportunities and key ingredients already exist to build/scale up responses through nascent social protection systems such as: existing targeting criteria; and tested (even resilient) delivery mechanisms: mobile money.
- **Key messages to take home include:**
 - Cash plus: cash transfers are essential, but not enough, as livelihood support needs to be provided in addition;
 - The delivery of cash-based interventions is an important base for building nascent social protection systems, especially in the case of Somalia.

Discussions enabled exploring further a few points:

- **On the importance and potential of developing social services** – This is fully behind the concept of ‘cash plus’ but maybe we need to define it. Many times, it is coming from a humanitarian perspective in these fragile environments, and it is not considering the ‘plus element’ needed in a long-term social protection system, such as the social workers/social care services. Is this a realistic objective? Is it reasonable to expect donors to begin to invest in these essential components of social protection systems? 70 per cent of Somali people are poor, so poverty is not a good targeting indicator – when a programme can at best reach 20 per cent of the population. It should be vulnerability based. Alongside this, social workers are needed to provide welfare services. Something that could support the development of this is a social registry to see who is getting what.
- **On engaging with governments in conflict settings** – How can we reinforce systems when the state may be part of the conflict? There is an issue of neutrality, and acceptance of the system by all parts of the community. This is an important question. We should move forward as much as we can. Flexibility is necessary, even if government engagement is quite light. We need to see how it evolves and look for

opportunities on a case-by-case basis. This will be one of the most challenging things for development donors to take on. But we need to look for the opportunities and where one arises, grab it.

- **On the appropriateness of cash transfers in Somalia** – There is an issue of using cash transfers in drought response where food is scarce. How did this not stress the food stocks that existed in Somalia? Market still functions in Somalia during crises, even if producers and pastoralists are the most impacted population. When cash transfers are provided, Somalia considers that it is the best way to support access to food and markets. Beneficiaries also prefer cash than in-kind support; it gives them choice. The livelihood component is provided to specific communities, like farmers or fishing communities.
- **On the role of civil society** – Where is the value added of civil society organisations in these contexts where government capacity is still fragile? The role of women’s groups, diaspora and other civil societies are essential, and composed of the main coordinated response to the crisis during the last 4-5 years. Coordination with those actors is essential. During the crisis, civil society has been strengthened and it improved its support to beneficiaries. We have to build on that for the next few years. In the drought responses we have learned the value of coordination and working together as actors. civil society organisations in the drought response have managed to create momentum – leveraging attention of the world.
- **On data management** – We need supporting developing evidence, managing data. In Somalia the data is there but it is not harmonized, coordinated. We need to ensure we reduce overlaps/duplications and have more equitable spread of assistance. The primary key identifier, de facto, is mobile phone number; how do we make use of this data to develop ID system/inform programmes?

Key conclusions and recommendations from this session include:

- Social Protection is a way to provide not only assistance but also hope for the future providing beneficiaries with the means to escape poverty and face the consequences of crisis.
- Social protection is key element to address the root causes of vulnerability allowing beneficiaries to cope with emergencies but also building the condition for improved resilience.
- Strong political will is essential to ensure coordination among development partners and harmonize approaches (targeting, management information system, delivery, mechanism, rates and geographical coverage).
- In order to build a sustainable and long lasting national social protection system in Somalia, it is important to build on: i) informal SP/traditional solidarity mechanisms (including remittances); ii) current cash based humanitarian response; and investment in basic services.
- When dealing with food security beneficiaries, it is key to bear in mind that different segments of the population have different needs (chronically vulnerable, chronically food insecure, seasonally food insecure, food secure). Therefore interventions need to be adjusted to specific needs.
- Cash is not enough: according the specificities of the context it is important to complement the CBI with essential services and livelihood support.
- Evidence suggest that cash-based interventions can contribute to build resilience and avoid selling assets, stimulate local economy, prevent displacements, enhance social cohesions, promote job creation and livelihood diversification.
- With regard to Somalia specifically, it is time to act and do not replicate the mistake made after 2011 crisis. Today all components needed to build a nationally led social protection system are there: political will, donors’ commitment (common medium-long term funding), and development partners’ implementation capacities.
- It is important to be realistic: in contexts like Somalia setting up a nationally led social protection system will take time and has to be conceived as a ‘process’ (progress will not be linear – long term 10-15 years).

- Supporting governments in fragile contexts in their efforts to build SP systems means work in the direction of economic efficiency: building systems before crisis hit is more efficient than responding to a crisis after the disruption has already occurred.

1.4.2 PARALLEL SESSION 1B

Chair: **Eppu Mikkonen-Jeanneret**, Senior Adviser for Global Social Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

David Majed, Senior Adviser to the Deputy Minister, Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, Afghanistan

Sheree Bennet, Research and Evaluation Adviser, International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Pia Stjernvall, Ambassador for Civilian Crises Management, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Civilian-crisis management and systemic social protection development in contexts of protracted crises

Nation building and addressing security is very relevant to social protection. State military and the police are unlikely to risk their lives in the absence of social protection for their family. There is a close relationship between the police's performance and the perceived legitimacy of the State. The police are the first face of the State. How to trust a policeman when he is not covered by any form of social protection? This is actually part of a comprehensive national social protection system. In addition, a minimum level of protection/security is needed in order to deliver services to populations. We need to look at mutual areas of interest and synergies.

There is a need for social protection people to engage in security sector reform. This requires joint efforts. In conflict-affected environments in particular, there are critical sectors that are not getting much attention at the moment, such as the peacebuilding and security sector, as everyone is looking at social protection, with a focus on social assistance for the poorest.

A systems approach may contradict a poverty focus. To the question 'should civil servants be included or not in an old age pension' a poverty focus would imply excluding them, while a systems approach would imply including them with a view to bridge the divide between ordinary citizens and State administration.

We need to find the social inclusion and social contract outcome that is of interest to the nation. In many countries, the question of the social contract is up in the air. It is a difficult area to engage in, but if we don't go there, we will deplore the same situation several decades away. In 1937 Finland introduced the maternity package, a baby box containing around 50 of the most vital products needed for the first year of a baby's life, provided to all families regardless of income. This box symbolizes that every child is equal and deserves an equal start in life. It is now part of Finland's culture and parents tend to prefer the in-kind package to the cash-grant option. Could this be a model to export to IDPs?

Social workers will be needed in all contexts. How do we support capacity building in that regard? This is currently another neglected area, with much of the attention put on cash transfers and other support measures.

Taxation needs much more attention. In the case of Pakistan, studies show that if taxes were duly paid, there would be no need for foreign aid. Fighting corruption can lead to improved legitimacy of the State, which in turn can encourage citizens to pay taxes. In Afghanistan, one million refugees and IDPs do not receive support because they live in remote areas. However, regardless of physical access, supporting them would require significant resources.

A shared research agenda is needed, shared between development partners and recipient governments. A first step would be to complete a mapping of on-going research. For instance, the impact of cash transfers on social outcomes such as social cohesion, protection and well-being remains an under-researched area in conflict-affected contexts. The IRC has engaged in a research agenda around cash for women's protection and health. In DRC, IRC promoted a continuous improvement model. Cash was given to girls directly. Excess cash enabled girls to develop future aspirations (that is, inviting them to wonder what to do with the excess cash, for instance, which professional path they want to take, etc.), but this also generated jealousy. In Pakistan, an IRC operational

research on cash transfers conducted in 2014 did not reveal any big win in term of cost-efficiency between using existing databases and community-based targeting.

1.4.3 PARALLEL SESSION 1C

Chair: **Dr Joanne Bosworth**, Regional Adviser, Social Policy, UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO)

Dr. Sheraz Khan, Coordinator of Social Health Protection Initiative, Department of Health, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

Prof Dr Tilman Brück, Founder and Director of the International Security and Development Centre

Paul Harvey, Chief Executive, Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium

Thinking long(er) term in fragile contexts

There is a theoretical case for social protection to help countries transitioning from fragility to stability. Stronger social protection systems could help to make people more resilient to shocks and reduce the need for humanitarian aid; social protection could contribute to state building, strengthen the social contract and make states less fragile; humanitarian aid in protracted crises could be adapted to help build nascent social protection systems. The contribution of social protection to build the legitimacy of the state and support state building is a critical hypothesis in the design of the health insurance plan in Pakistan. The vision is that the scheme can i) prevent people from falling into poverty traps due to catastrophic health expenditure (including IDPs), ii) improve other outcomes (nutrition, education) which households can invest in due to savings from health care-related costs, and iii) enhance state legitimacy (decrease political fragility) – interestingly, if the UNHCR were to take on responsibility for premiums for Afghan refugees, then they could use the same system to access healthcare. The scheme can further help to improve service delivery. The understanding is that health sector quality was/is actually increasing (in addition to access) due to competition between private and public sectors.

Our knowledge base in this field is still weak and needs building up. These claims are plausible, but there is limited practice and less evidence. Considering the five states of learning – 1) theoretical, 2) evidence of concepts, 3) emergence of impacts, 4) evidence on implementation, 5) evidence of fine-tuning – we may be at state 1 now, but we need to get to state 4-5. There are very few rigorous studies at the moment. We currently tend to focus on individual case studies and are not so good at extrapolating general principles. Case study approaches remain essential and can tell us many things – lots of case studies, lots of evidence. What is important is to ensure they are accessible – other people have to know. We need to invest and build up the knowledge stock, focusing on the global public good of knowledge base. The time to invest in evidence is now.

We need to redefine fragility, moving beyond standard country-level concept of fragility, which are of limited value to social protection on the ground, to a view of fragility that focuses on institutions and people. Fragility concerns institutional strength experienced by people. There are many relevant institutions, which can be formal and informal. This implies that fragility is heterogeneous (by gender, ethnicity, occupation, location, etc.) and endogenous (fragility shapes people and people shape fragility). We must invest in measurement to quantify fragility across people and settings.

We need to develop a strong theory of whether and how social protection and fragility are linked. We have people who are experts in social protection, and experts in fragility, but we rarely have both sets of people working together on the same projects. There are two distinct pathways from social protection to reduced fragility: i) protection effects, which are transmitted via direct benefits of social protection and require that the programme impacts successfully (e.g. transfer payments reduce grudges against government); ii) programme effects, which occur as a result of a social protection programme taking place – the programme needs not be successful in its own right (e.g. mixing participants of different ethnic groups in a training). There are different drivers of adverse behaviour at the micro level: lack of opportunity, existence of grievance, lack of contact. This has implications for programming. We need to pay special attention at the micro level at: ‘at-risk’ groups, like youth, who face conditions that may hinder their personal development and integration into society; ‘high-risk’ groups, like ex-combatants, who may instigate violence. We need to beware of and measure partial and net effects (intervention may have positive effects but net effects may be negative if, for instance, non-participants

suffer from the intervention), as well as unintended effects (which may be positive or negative, and should be detected in evaluations and research, but rarely are). It is important to think about and incorporate these into research.

It is the *how* that matters. Reviewing delivering services and perception of the state using a five-country panel survey, the [Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium](#) found no straightforward relationship between delivering services or providing social protection and peoples' perceptions of the state. Negative experiences can delegitimise. Targeting in humanitarian and development, for instance, is often done badly, which can contribute to undermining legitimacy and cause problems – broader, more categorical approaches better. Problems undermine perception while knowledge rebuilds it.

It is important to prioritise service delivery for service delivery's sake, paying more attention to the quality of services, especially accountability systems. Evidence shows that programmes can contribute to building state legitimacy even where it is donor-funded NGOs that are delivering. We need to avoid being so binary in the way we relate to states – a variety of actors are needed. We shouldn't assume that non-state provision undermines state building. We need to build systems that facilitate relationships of trust between people and state. "Trust arrives on foot but leaves on horseback" – legitimisation may take years, but de-legitimization may be very rapid. This implies that more attention needs to be paid to corruption, exclusion and how people are treated.

In fragile contexts, social protection programmes should not be too complicated. We shouldn't use the lack of evidence as an excuse for inaction. We should deliver social protection programmes, but we should do them differently—adjusted for the fragile setting. We should be cautious about claims, and don't assume we can kill two birds with one stone. There is a need to not overburden social protection by calling it peace-building, addressing fragility, etc. It is important not to try to shoehorn everything in or do too much in these contexts. We cannot overburden social protection with other things. It is recommended to just implement a simple social protection programme, then make sure to measure what is happening, especially unintended consequences. Good design is crucial. It is important to recognize that bad programmes can undermine trust and lead to social exclusion. Programmes need to be inclusive, and perceived as fair.

Time horizons are critical. The types of programmes and systems crucially depend on the expected time horizons for various strategies. For thinking long term, we need to be realistic about time horizons for refugees, protracted crises, reoccurring natural disasters—some of these can be reasonably projected or forecasted. For example, integrating refugees into national systems may or may not make sense depending on the setting. We need to be honest on realistically how long countries will be hosting refugees and develop policies accordingly. If we know that the situation will be protracted, we need to encourage longer-term ways of working – e.g. opening up labour markets, etc. The role of the international community is to support the development of systems/institutions/infrastructure so that host countries can provide adequate support to refugees. We are often constrained by path dependency. It is important to start now, no matter what the situation of the national government-led systems.

1.5 PLENARY SESSION 1

Watch recording: [English](#) | [Français](#) | [العربية](#)

Moderator: **Steen Jorgensen**, Director for Social Protection, Labour and Jobs, World Bank Group

Natalia Winder Rossi, Deputy Director (a.i.) / Social Protection Team Leader, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Carell Laurent, Deputy Director, Centre for Resilience / Foreign Service Officer, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Dr Fabio Veras, Senior Researcher, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG)

Camilla Knox-Peebles, Deputy Humanitarian Director, Oxfam

Social protection in fragile contexts: lessons learned and moving forward

We need to be ambitious in terms of our long-term vision, as well as very realistic in terms of what we can achieve in the short, medium and long term. This is a new area, because these are new challenges, so we need to put our heads together. This is a process, a learning path. As such, there are no experts but fellow learners. Building risk-informed social protection in context of requires two things: innovation that can be tested, improved, proven, and then scaled up, as well as the flexibility to have reality checks along the way.

- **Learning:**

- We can learn from other contexts that are similar, even if not exactly the same – many things can be extrapolated. We need to take advantage of all the things that humanitarian actors are doing across the spectrum to find innovation in very complex contexts to be able to build something that may not be the perfect system we want to see from a long-term development point of view, but something that gets us towards a more cost effective, integrated, coherent and impactful system. This might not be social protection per se but better than the state of play.
- We need to better learn from community-based structures/local systems that have been working for a long time in the absence of state support.

- **Being innovative:**

- How to combine funding streams, e.g. combining development funds for system building and humanitarian financing mechanisms for the shock response aspects – We need to be innovative to combine predictable forms of funding, looking at the different pieces of the puzzle.
- How to combine cash with other support (nutrition, productive interventions, etc.) – Cash has been the instrument of choice in many of the responses for obvious reasons, but is only one in a set of instruments. It needs to be complemented with other instruments. We need to consider ‘resilience’ in a more comprehensive way along social as well as economic dimensions.

- **Being flexible and having reality checks:**

- We need to be realistic: What can we do in 6 months, in a year, in the short term, etc.? We need to consider what we need to put in place in order to progressively move towards effective systems.
- Can we have a menu of responses based on the specificities of the context and more importantly on the specific vulnerabilities of the populations we are trying to reach?

- **Adopting a system perspective:**

- There has been recognition in the resilience perspective that we cannot look at it from one angle (food security angle, livelihoods angle, basic services angle, etc.). We need to combine the different components. This work has always been seen only as a social-type activity, while in reality, it also contributes to a broader socio-economic-type transformation. How can we translate a resilience perspective also when thinking about a national social protection system?
- We heard before that we needed to give people cash but also hope. The definition of what hope means would vary (e.g. is it moving from subsistence to productivity, is it moving from receiving basic services to being able to take care of one’s family in the long-term, etc.). It is becoming difficult in these contexts to define the ‘plus’. This is the concept of systems that brings us together today.

From a donor perspective,

- **There are a number of challenges we will continue to face:**

- Combining humanitarian and development funding instruments, budgets and perspectives — There are ways of making adjustments, but it is a challenge and will continue to be so. We cannot change things overnight. We can look at crosscutting programming but a lot of the work funded by donors has to be pigeon holed into development or humanitarian interventions.

- Short vs. long term – Programmatically speaking, many programmes start out being short-term response programmes and expand to become more protracted.
- Implementing partners – Are we working with government for implementation vs. United Nations agencies vs. non-governmental organisations (NGOs)? The nature of funding, award modalities, etc. will differ accordingly.
- Relationships – What is achieved can often be defined by what the implementing partner's relationship is with national government, other NGOs, etc. This needs to be considered at the outset, and inform programme design.
- **Ways to alleviate these challenges include:**
 - Using learning, the evidence base and using this to inform programme design. Who is doing the learning – who is it reaching, is it taking all actors along the journey? Evidence is often not shared, but this learning is needed to inform programme design. There is a need to an increased focus on learning in contexts where there is no state.
 - Understanding the long-term situation (root causes and coping mechanisms) and building on this to complement and not exhaust coping strategies – rather than just responding to the immediate crisis.
 - Using the context and ensuring design is based on context will become more important – knowing the population you are working with and looking at it from the perspective of how the population you are working with is reacting to the shock rather than shock itself.
 - Shock-responsive planning – it is easier to move from stable to unstable system, as it provides a basis for operating in an unstable context. In that regard, how can we better make use of insurance mechanisms, exploring existing country experiences? But we also need to understand the limitations – what crises can it be used for, and when will it be exhausted – e.g. in the Caribbean now, with multiple hurricanes and affected countries, could such a system cope?

The case of Yemen illustrates two aspects:

- **How the national social protection system can help to respond to a humanitarian crisis** – One of the recommendations from the recent DFID-funded [study on Shock-responsive social protection systems](#) conducted by the Oxford Policy Management is to look at the informal as well as formal social protection systems in place that could potentially be used in the response to a crisis. Yemen had a large social transfer scheme, the Social Welfare Fund – a scheme largely focused on vulnerable categories that need protection (as opposed to households living in monetary poverty). Most people were pessimistic about the system and did not believe social workers worked and beneficiaries actually receive their payments. So the results of the household survey (combined with administrative data from the scheme), that showed that the scheme actually worked, came as a big surprise. The database of the scheme was used for the humanitarian response. This being said, attention needs to be paid on how poverty data is used; targeting people in an emergency response may need different approaches.
- **How can the humanitarian system help to build the national social protection system** – The issue of building /strengthening the underlying social protection system needs more focus, more work. It is still just an idea. We should not be too exigent, especially in terms of funding. A country like Yemen will continue to receive budget support to help reconstruct the state functions. Learning from humanitarian responses is needed to help re-build these state functions.

It is key to keep working together and learning from each sector. We need more learning, more evidence, to be used to strengthen the social protection systems – for instance, as in Yemen, working at scale, and updating and improving the social protection beneficiary list in the process. We need to respect each other and work together – see, for instance, joint learning that is happening between the World Bank and the World Food Programme. We shall respect the respective added values we have as organisations – civil society organisations are in good

position for innovating, testing, piloting at small scale and in partnership with local government, working in a coordinated way. Humanitarian actors need to be more mindful of what is already in place or planned, within government and development spheres. Maybe we need people with different skill sets here. Equally, there is a lot to learn from humanitarian responses (for instance, around Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme, Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme, and efforts in Somalia to define the national social protection policy and the implementation plan to go under). Working together, we can contribute to not only saving lives in the short term but also in the longer term, and protecting people. This is fundamental, but sometimes humanitarian and development actors speak different languages. There is a cultural mind-set that needs to change – this conference is one of a few useful first steps in that direction.

Concerning financing:

- **It's not all about money but financing is pretty critical.** 80 per cent of protracted crises continue for more than five years; and humanitarian financing tools are not designed for that length of time. We need long-term financing models, and development actors there at the table to deliver on the ground together.
- **There is a role for supranational financing.** It would be useful to have a global pooled fund for such initiatives supporting all groups (refugees, host communities, etc.). There is often limited coverage of social protection for citizens, especially in the informal sector (such agriculture, rural sectors), and governments may be reluctant to extend social protection to non-nationals when this is still the case. A global trust fund would be useful to help government build their systems. This is not to replace government commitment but to help move from scattered programmes to systems, by expanding coverage and setting up/improving a system's nuts and bolts to move from scattered programmes to systems, such as early warning systems, MIS, registries. This costs money, takes time and requires analytical capacities. We should pool financing to enable both the strengthening of national systems and the shock response component.
- **Contingency financing has a role to play.** Caribbean islands did benefit from a catastrophic bond that was issued. So it is possible to do, but what the insurance pool needs to be increased to make it global. This may be the role of any global money or some global guarantees.

Other important considerations include:

- Investing in preparedness is crucial but most of the time countries are already in crisis. We need to work out how to develop social protection systems when in the middle of crisis, not before the crisis.
- Getting the targeting right is going to be essential. A good understanding of risks and vulnerability is critical. There is a cohort of people that is assisted in the long-term, and an additional cohort to be assisted in times of crisis. We probably need to move beyond proxy-means test (PMT) to something much more community sensitive – and we need to engage local and national organisations in discussions towards developing robust targeting approaches.
- Community involvement is important. Communities can play roles across the project cycle to build the system, to support programme design (for instance, to define the 'cash plus' components), to guide and support implementation (for instance, assisting in targeting, not just receiving, mobilising collective actions) and also ensure accountability.
- We need a holistic vision of society and a mechanism that supports this cohesive society, including both refugees/disaster-affected and the host populations.
- Making a business case, as in Jordan, to show how displaced/migrants can contribute to the economy may be an incentive for governments to include non-nationals.

So the plea is to be ambitious, and also to be realistic, but let's not be so realistic that we don't dare be ambitious. We need to be strategically opportunistic. We don't want to miss opportunities, so we need to have

a clear strategy and seize the opportunity when it is there – as it happened in Yemen. “We need to fix the plane while we’re still flying.” We need to be out there. Let’s not wait.

1.6 SPEED NETWORKING SESSION 1

Read session abstracts on pp. 18-21 of the [Conference programme](#)

Moderator: **Juergen Hohmann**, Social Protection Expert, European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)

1. **Asha Sawyer**, Cash Based Interventions Coordinator, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Somalia: *CASH+ Approach in Fragile Contexts*
2. **James Canonge**, Social Protection Policy Officer, Social Protection Department, International Labour Organization (ILO) — *Building Social Protection Floors in Contexts of Fragility and Forced Displacement*
3. **Arthur van Diesen**, Regional Adviser, Social Policy, UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) — *UNICEF’s Experience with Humanitarian Cash and Voucher Programmes in the Middle East and North Africa – Lessons Learned*
4. **Claudia Ah Poe**, Senior Food Security Adviser, Vulnerability Analysis Unit, Programme and Policy Division, World Food Programme (WFP) — *Voices of the Displaced and the Role of Social Protection*
5. **Dr Christoph Strupat**, Economist, German Development Institute — *Cash Transfer Programmes and Food Security in Fragile States - Case Studies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and Chad*
6. **Harry Mwamlima**, Director, Poverty Reduction and Social Protection, Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, Malawi (with support from DFID, EU, GIZ, UNICEF, WFP, and World Bank) — *Weaving Social Safety Nets in Fragile Contexts: Building a more Agile, Integrated and Shock-Sensitive Social Protection System in Malawi*
7. **Tsepang Mankhatho Julia Linko**, Director of Planning, Ministry of Social Development, Lesotho (with support from FAO, UNICEF, WFP) — *Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems: Lesotho Experience in Emergency Response*
8. **Nestor B. Ramos**, Regional Director, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Philippines — *The Case of Marawi Siege: Department of Social Welfare and Development’s Social Protection Interventions for Internally Displaced Families*
9. **Irenée Arimanana Ravelojaona**, Director General of Social protection, Ministry of Population, Social Protection and Promotion of Women, Madagascar — *How Madagascar is Scaling up Shock-Responsive Social Protection to Improve Poor Families’ Lives*

2.1 WELCOME 2ND DAY

Watch recording: [English](#) | [Français](#) | [العربية](#)

Host: **Alexandra Yuster**, Associate Director, Programme Division; Global Chief, Social Inclusion and Policy, UNICEF HQ

A few take-aways from Day 1:

- We saw a **remarkable consensus** from the outset about the potential value of social protection to mitigate the impact of crises, a strong commitment to support social protection in contexts of fragility and forced displacement, and an eagerness to learn and apply what we learn here.
- We saw a **strong preference for the use of long-term rather than parallel systems** because of the value they bring both for the resilience of the communities that they are meant to reach, as well as the systems which are meant to support people longer term. We understood that shorter term thinking and planning does not really work in contexts of protracted crises that have been going on for years. A longer-term vision and a clear roadmap are needed.
- We understood the challenge that is created both for countries and indeed for partners given the different mechanisms for development and humanitarian support. We not only need to bring the actions, **we actually need to bridge the architecture**—humanitarian funding and tools are not really designed for dealing with longer-term protracted crises.
- We understood that social protection works best when it delivers more than cash, and **support for ‘Cash plus’ is strong**, while recognising that what that ‘plus’ consists of in different contexts may be quite different.
- We were challenged about the lack of evidence on what makes social protection work in contexts of fragility and forced displacement, but we agreed that that should **not stop us from trying**.
- We understood that it is worthwhile to **be opportunistic** and to start from what exists, whether it is an existing social protection system or the component of humanitarian programming that are relevant for building that system.

Forced displacement, the focus of Day 2, is today a reality on a scale not seen in half a century. At the same time, social protection mechanisms are far more widespread, and their potential to support effective longer-term responses has becoming increasingly clear. The few videos played are to help us keep the voices and experiences of affected people at the forefront of our minds.

2.2 PARALLEL SESSIONS 2

Read parallel session concept notes on pp. 14-16 of the [Conference programme](#)

2.2.1 PARALLEL SESSION 2A

Chair: **Dr Silvia Morgenroth**, Head of Division 321 “Tackling the Root Causes of Displacement”, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ)

Mario Abou Zeid, Senior Adviser to the Minister for the Refugee Portfolio, General Supervisor of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, Ministry of Social Affairs, Lebanon

Kenn Crossley, Deputy Director, Programme and Policy Division, World Food Programme (WFP)

Violet Warnery, Deputy Representative, Programme Section, UNICEF Lebanon

Thinking longer term in contexts of fragility and forced displacement

Thinking longer term in contexts of fragility and forced displacement

Maintaining social stability in Lebanon requires considering citizens as well as refugees. With 1.5 million refugees, Lebanon is under tremendous pressure – one in three persons in Lebanon are refugees (including Syrian

and Palestinian refugees). 70 per cent of the border is shared with Syria, so the crisis has an impact on Lebanon both in terms of stability and its economy. The international community's response – notably through the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan – has aimed to support Lebanon and specifically Lebanese line Ministries and municipalities to deal with the increased pressure on infrastructure and livelihoods. Negative coping strategies are increasingly witnessed also amongst host populations. Refugees are located in the poorest areas. Delivering social protection to those in need among both refugees and host communities can help reduce tensions between groups otherwise receiving support to varying extent. Using already existing national programmes without overburdening them constitutes a challenge as well as an opportunity.

The Lebanese government provides support to the most vulnerable Lebanese through the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP), the first and only social assistance programme operational since 2012 at a small scale. The NPTP is not accessible to refugees, but is run through the Social Development Centres (SDCs), which are also the most important front line structure for delivering a variety of services to refugees. While efforts are being taken to improve needed coordination among centres, the NPTP will also adapt its approach to addressing vulnerabilities in the future. To this end, the programme aims to support people in graduating from their vulnerabilities, focusing on cross-sectoral approaches to address these from different angles, creating livelihoods and job opportunities. Particular attention will therefore have to be paid to better coordination between government and development partners to achieve this goal. While government and development partners have jointly developed the Lebanese Crisis Response Plan (LCRP 2017-2020), present representatives agreed on the need to further strengthen cooperation across sectors and institutions.

As part of the NPTP, the Lebanese government has a continuous and successful cooperation with the WFP and with the World Bank for the further development of the programme. In order to address the enormous impact the crisis was having on vulnerable Lebanese, WFP provided advice on how to apply instruments for delivery used in the joint WFP-UNHCR-UNICEF refugee cash support programmes, assisting 750,000 refugees in Lebanon each month. As a consequence, an e-card system was established as part of the NPTP to strengthen the programme's delivery system. Further WFP support includes needs assessments, improving targeting as well as management and information systems (MIS) to be used in real time.

- Lessons learned and challenges identified in this process include:
 - Managing political economy considerations is key.
 - The perfect can be the enemy of the good. It is better to have a good programme, even if it needs to be strengthened, rather than seek to change everything. To make the nascent NPTP more shock resistant, it is needed to start with what exists and build from that. The current system shouldn't be overburdened and overly high expectations should be avoided. Pragmatic realism is needed, and no rush change before the system is ready.
 - Understanding and strengthening the existing system and institutional set up is crucial.
 - Multiple, competing systems need to be avoided through jointly developed goals of government and development partners and alignment with government policy.

Development partners have supported links between humanitarian safety nets and the national social protection system. This has included taking best practices from the refugee response programme and applying them to the nascent national system. Another example presented during this session, a UNICEF pilot project monetizing winter kits, highlighted through an evaluation, how an unconditional cash transfer with complementary measures could not only be beneficial for refugees, but also vulnerable and poor Lebanese part of the NPTP. Lessons learned from UNICEF's education-related cash and referral programme implemented with the Ministry of Education and a local NGO- Caritas- for refugee children has shown greater school enrolment, school attendance, 60 percent of children in supported households to return to school with one household visits and a decrease in coping strategies harmful to children. The programme design and the lessons have supported the design of a similar programme within the NPTP for Lebanese poor children as part of the NPTP new revised strategy.

The Lebanese government is now aiming to move from an emergency response approach to a longer-term vision. In order to not only address the current crisis, the many ongoing activities of government and development partners provide an opportunity to lay the groundwork and building blocks for a social protection system that will be shock-responsive in the future, recognizing it can and needs to adapt over time. As most refugees in Lebanon have access to social services being provided by Ministries and its local gateways, there is a high potential that by strengthening the national social protection system it will support the targeting and access to both poor Lebanese and refugees. With the focus of the Ministry of Social Affairs being on transparency, efficiency and coordination, it will be critical to learn from experiences presented particularly regarding delivery systems, the best use of knowledge and structured dialogue: starting with good vulnerability analyses; jointly discussing and applying the most appropriate targeting approach; implementing verification/accountability systems – an effective monitoring and evaluation system (to avoid leakage) and feedback and complaints mechanisms, using digitization of information.

In order to move from fragmented short-term support towards longer-term system strengthening, a shift will have to occur both in terms of development partners' support and the Lebanese government's objectives and priorities in terms of building a comprehensive social protection system – including existing social insurance building blocks – that will be adaptive and able to respond to various shocks in the future.

The vision is to cover all needs – of Palestinian refugees, Syrian refugees and Lebanese – and to create complimentary systems that are responsive to the needs of those living in poverty in times of stability and can be responsive to additional needs in times of crisis/protracted crisis. Efforts are being made to strengthen services and link the complementary approaches, the one targeting Syrian refugees, one targeting Palestinian refugees and the one targeting Lebanese citizens. To this end, success factors include:

- **Ensuring interventions are context-specific and adapt to contextual changes.** Context matters. The context has changed and evolved since 2011, and so actions have evolved in response – adapting existing programmes and/or creating new ones;
- **Overcoming fragmentation** (e.g. in needs assessments);
- **Formulating a clear vision** – the government has provided a clear direction through a graduation approach, which also involves a demand for a higher degree of complementarity between programmes, including those implemented and/or supported by development partners;
- **Ensuring cross-sectoral integration and coordination** – will not be possible without strong partnerships with other actors on the ground based on transparency, particularly in protracted crises;
- **Guaranteeing transparency** in how funds for social protection are allocated.

2.2.2 PARALLEL SESSION 2B

Watch recording: [English](#) | [Français](#) | [العربية](#)

Co-chairs: **Massimo La Rosa**, Global Thematic Coordinator on Forced Displacement and Migration, European Commission's Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) & **Camilla Hagström**, Deputy Head of Unit of DEVCO B3, Migration and Employment, European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)
Ramazan Özdağ, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Family and Social Policies and Social Policy General Directorate of Social Assistance, Turkey

Jonathan Campbell, Deputy Country Director, World Food Programme (WFP) Turkey

Dr Francesca Bastagli, Head of Social Protection and Social Policy Programme, Overseas Development Institute

Meeting commitments in receiving countries: extending social protection to displaced persons

Migration is increasingly on the political agenda for it brings both challenges and opportunities. Under the Sustainable Development Goals, migration has a key focus (including positive impact). We are under more pressure to address the challenges and also build on opportunities that increasing migration and refugee flows bring. We need the right responses – a siloed approach is no longer fit for purpose. There is a recognition that we need to address migration in a multidimensional framework and have multi-sectoral responses. We shouldn't

underestimate the complexities and inter-linkages. We do not yet have all the answers or full understanding yet, but social protection can be considered a key part of this evolving approach (e.g. social protection is at the core of the 2016 [EU Regulation on refugees](#)). Understanding experiences of dealing with this issue in Turkey notably is useful to start drawing lessons for addressing migration/forced displacement.

In Turkey, social protection services are available to both Turkish nationals and foreigners.

- The social protection system in Turkey can be divided under three headings:
 - Social assistance – The authorised agency is the General Directorate of Social Assistance of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP). It consists of in-kind and cash social assistance in scope of policies aiming to fight against poverty. The Social Assistance and Solidarity (SAS) Fund is out of general budget and managed by the SAS Fund Board. Payments are managed by the SAS Foundations (1,000 foundations in total, in each province and district of Turkey), and targeted at the disabled, the elderly and the poor. Payments are transferred from central budget to foundations. The Foundation budget is 6.5 million and the national budget is about 1 billion.
 - Social insurance – The authorised agencies are the Turkish employment agency and the Social Security Institution, for formal social security (deductions from employers and employees). It includes social insurance (incl. contributory pensions) and general health insurance systems and other programmes/projects aiming at employment and work life.
 - Social services – The authorised agencies are the MoFSP (for preventive measures and psychosocial services for the vulnerable), the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of National Education. It includes services provided by care institutions, and rehabilitation and counselling services. Health premiums of vulnerable are paid by the government to allow these too. Formally registered foreigners (Syrians and others) can avail of these. Education services are free for citizens and foreign nationals.
- The Integrated Social Assistance System Information System (ISAIS) is particularly important. It is based on ID numbers and automated, managing everything from application to payment, and linked with data from 28 organisations. It allows central communication, making announcement possible to all SAS Foundations. All civil registry and entitlements information is included. The process goes like this: an individual applies at the SAS Foundation with their ID; the ID is entered into the ISAIS to reveal the assets and social security of the individual; a home visit is organised for the survey; the system plus the Foundation board makes the decision on eligibility; the individual receives an SMS for eligibility and is told to visit PTT Bank; s/he is then enrolled and receives a PTT ATM card, which is delivered at home for those who cannot visit the PTT offices. All accounting transactions are then done through this ISAIS. It can analyse the data being collected through the programme, which can be extracted for monitoring and evaluation, and for financial planning and budget analysis.
- The [Emergency Social Safety Net](#) (ESSN) is an aid programme financed by the European Union and implemented in partnership with World Food Programme (WFP), the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) and the MoFSP to address the needs of refugees – of different origins (92 per cent of ESSN beneficiaries are Syrian, others are Afghans, Iraqi, etc.) and different ‘migration waves’ (the ESSN picks up longer-term refugees as well as new arrivals). Syrians are highly concentrated in the Southeast of the country, and also migration slowly across the country to Aegean region. A total of 3,000,367 refugees have been assisted through the ESSN. Applications are made through the SAS Foundations, supported through Red Crescent service centres in highly populated areas. Applicants are entered in the ISAIS, and eligibility is based on defined criteria. Assistance has been provided before home visits were organised in order to provide assistance quickly – yet, these home visits will still happen. Halk Bank is the financial provider, through a World Food Programme contract.
- There is also a conditional cash transfer project for education (CCT-Ed) funded through ECHO, as an expansion of the CCT-Ed for citizens, with the objective to get refugee children into regular school attendance. Applications are done with refugee ID too. Different values in assistance are set for boy and

girl children on the CCT-Ed because, under the Turkish constitution, there is positive discrimination for females since they are facing the brunt of poverty, and in education they face more barriers to accessing education.

- Opportunities/enablers include: a powerful MIS (the ISAIS); institutional strength and geographical coverage of the SAS Foundations; the possibility to expand this system quickly; flexibility to make it possible to revise eligibility criteria in just one week/10 days; past experience in responding to mass migration – the system is very applicable for those facing these crises.
- Challenges include: additional workload on public services / strain on physical infrastructure; registration problems stemming from sudden migration movements (staffing was a big issue then); language barrier; adaptation problems for migrants regarding new procedures they encountered when they were required to take steps to apply and register, use a bank card, make official transactions, etc.

In the context of a strong government and a nation-wide and sophisticated social protection system, it makes sense for humanitarian actors to change their way of working. The ESSN, a safety net that support the most vulnerable refugees in Turkey covering their basic needs through unrestricted cash, is an innovative programme that successfully bridges the humanitarian-development divide and embodies the principles of the [Grand Bargain](#) agreed at the Istanbul [World Humanitarian Summit](#) in May 2016. The ESSN is an embodiment of the [Grand Bargain](#). It is based on solid partnerships, and implemented through existing Turkish social assistance infrastructure. Its approach is innovative in deploying a hybrid social assistance scheme implemented through national social protection systems while integrating humanitarian safeguards.

- **Partnerships**—Partnerships are central to the ESSN. They were established both with agencies involved in direct implementation – between the WFP, the MoFSP (for targeting and registration), the TRC (for registration support and monitoring) and ECHO – and the extended network of national partners without whom the ESSN could not be successfully implemented. This includes the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) – the national agency responsible for migration management (including refugee registration), and the Directorate General for Population and Citizenship (DGPC), responsible for address registration, a prerequisite of applying to the ESSN. To be eligible refugees need to be formally registered with the Directorate General of Migration Management, as well as in the civil registry (physical address). It is proving to be cost efficient – reducing the costs of what we are doing.
- **Multipurpose cash**—The ESSN provides meaningful, regular and predictable assistance to address the basic needs of the most vulnerable refugees. The unrestricted cash modality promotes the dignity, autonomy and choice of beneficiaries. Cash also creates opportunities for delivering aid in different ways, which have the potential to reduce costs, drive innovation, strengthen linkages beyond aid, and enhance coverage.
- **Nationwide network**—If we look at the timeline, it scaled up very quickly, in 10 months only: launched in September 2016; piloted in three areas in October 2016; taking applications on 28th November 2016; first payment in December 2016. By August 2017, it reached one million beneficiaries (those who meet the eligibility criteria) across Turkey. They have all been selected and enrolled. All will be receiving first payments soon. Turkey is a large country and this was only made possible by implementing the ESSN through national systems, leveraging existing structures with coverage across the whole country.
- **Governance**—The governance structure of the ESSN reflects the principle of ‘Doing a humanitarian response through a development modality’. The Governing Board, the high-level decision-making body, is chaired by ECHO and AFAD (the Turkish Disaster Relief Agency). The WFP, the TRC, and the MoFSP are members. The Joint Management Cell is an innovative structure in which the WFP and the TRC sit in the same office in Ankara, working thematically together. It has been increasing communication, and building efficiency.
- **Quality and accountability**—In addition to the new way of working and innovations, we need to ensure programme quality and accountability systems are in place.

- Technical assistance:
 - The targeting system effectively prioritises poorer households for assistance. Modelling was done by the World Bank; even though it used very simple criteria based on demographic data (only data available quickly), it shows relatively small inclusion error. The portfolio of beneficiaries includes relatively few non-poor households. Concerns remain about the exclusion error, that is, about identifying and supporting the extremely poor households who are erroneously deemed not eligible (9 per cent of applicants). Efforts are ongoing to try and reduce this, in discussions with SAS Foundations.
 - There were lots of assessment and modelling on the transfer value. While the transfer value is not as high as humanitarian actors wanted, the assistance is still meaningful and makes a difference – as suggested by World Bank studies. It covers around half of what extremely poor households are spending every month.
- Accountability to affected populations (AAP): Complaints and feedback mechanisms were set up to ensure affected populations have an opportunity to report complaints and grievances. There is a 2-way communication between beneficiaries and implementing agencies, which include:
 - Call centres run by the TRC runs: 23 operators who collectively speak 6 languages (including Turkish, Arabic, Farsi, Pashto and English); over 350,000 calls received; average waiting time of 2 minutes only;
 - Facebook page: over 53,000 followers; average response time on queries of one hour; 99 per cent of questions answered; social media channel appreciated by beneficiaries;
 - Website with 20,000 followers;
- Project accountability: Beneficiary feedback is used to improve the quality of the ESSN programme. The WFP has overall accountability to ECHO for the delivery of the programme. This is ensured through:
 - Monitoring and evaluation: onsite monitoring, results monitoring, decentralised review, independent evaluation to ensure the programme is implemented in line with humanitarian standards and that the intended results are achieved – research/lessons learning is a requirement of the ECHO grant; one issue worth noting is that in this context the government owns the data (on refugees, on social protection) and has very strict data protection rules; this can limit access to and sharing of data and can be a challenge for knowledge management;
 - Beneficiary verification: multi-stage verification process of beneficiary lists to ensure assistance reaches the right people;
 - Financial reconciliation: verification of transferred funds to ensure accountability for the funds transferred to WFP’s cooperating partners and beneficiaries.

A key aspect of the ESSN is to promote social cohesion. The government actually calls the ESSN the ‘Social Cohesion Programme’. It relieves some of the immense pressures on national systems and the communities hosting the world’s largest refugee population, in particular in the Southeast and in big cities (approximately 50 per cent of refugees and asylum seekers are living in Turkey’s southern provinces and 20 per cent are living in Istanbul). A majority of Turkish people believe Syrians should be provided with basic needs support, by the Turkish Government and the international community. As the ESSN is implemented through national systems, it is understandable to host communities. It supports the integration of refugees into national systems. A social cohesion study shows that: 61 per cent of Turkish respondents believe that Syrians should be free to live in host communities (not restricted to camps); 77 per cent of Syrians feel safe and 70 per cent believe their children have a bright future in Turkey; 84 per cent of Syrians speak or would like to learn Turkish; 89 per cent of Syrians believe Turkish people have helped them; discord is primarily over competition for jobs and rising cost of living.

In terms of replicability, the ESSN was only made possible by the following enabling factors: an upper middle-income country context; strong existing national social protection systems/infrastructure; strong donor commitment; dynamic, committed Government with partnership ethos; close partnerships with the Turkish Red Crescent; extensive, existing networks across the country; financial literacy of beneficiaries; ability to target with

limited data. Most of all, the ESSN was made possible thanks to the incredible generosity of the Turkish Government and people for opening their doors to millions of refugees in need of protection. The Turkish example serves as an important lesson to the international community.

Turning to how global research can support work in this area, it is reminded that terminology matters. There are some overlaps and also distinctions between the objectives and principles that underpin social protection and humanitarian action. Social protection pursues poverty relief/supports vulnerable groups, but also objectives of risk pooling, income/consumption smoothing, and redistribution, both vertical and horizontal, over the course of people's lifetimes. These objectives matter hugely and have important implications for the policy options we consider when talking about extending social protection to affected and displaced populations. The length of displacement, the legal status of the person, plans about repatriation, resettlement or repatriation influence the planning of (and limitations of) their inclusion in the social protection system and the financial sustainability. Cash transfer programming is an obvious way to link humanitarian action to social protection but other policy instruments/objectives can also be thought through.

Different research areas are particularly relevant to inform policy and programming towards extending social protection to displaced persons. These include:

- **Shock-sensitive and shock-responsive social protection** – This recent research area considers how to design and implement policies and systems that are flexible, adaptive, able to provide timely and adequate response in the event of a shock. It has focused on financial/economic shocks and extreme weather/climate related shocks, but it brings relevant lessons on policy design and implementation details that allow doing it efficiently and effectively – including on issues such as targeting, information systems, early warning systems and triggers, and contingency financing. A consistent finding is that having the policy/system in place before a shock hits makes a huge difference. In practice, we often set up systems in the context of a crisis, but there are examples of mechanisms established in a crisis context that later evolved and became part of the national system.
- **Extending social protection to migrant workers** – This is a second area where strong research is happening. It should be made distinct from forced displacement, but shared learning might be possible on systems. This can bring important lessons, relevant for displaced populations, on barriers to participation and take-up, for instance: legal and regulatory framework restricting or enabling access; identification system; information, knowledge exchange and language; affordability; portability (of social insurance schemes in particular).
- **Social protection impact** – A wealth of evidence, generally very favourable, exists on the impact of social protection on wellbeing outcomes (monetary poverty, health; education; empowerment and dignity) on national populations but increasingly also on displaced populations. In addition, evidence suggests potential for promoting social cohesion – as exemplified by the case of the ESSN in Turkey. It also shows unintended positive effects, for instance, on work participation, social cohesion, improved service delivery, social contract, and inclination to pay taxes. So social protection can be effective if appropriately designed and implemented. It can also lead to unintended negative effects that offset progress in intended direction. We need to be careful about monitoring these external effects and addressing these. For instance, with targeted cash transfers, the mechanism can cause negative incentives such as disincentives to work. So if the eligibility of refugees is based on whether they hold a work permit, this may deter them from holding one. This might also just be a perception of the refugee, so it needs careful consideration. The issue of fairness/equity in design is also very important. Real or perceived differential treatment could exacerbate tensions between different refugee populations and between citizens and refugees.
- **Implications of migration for labour markets and social protection** – This is yet another area where there is a strong body of research. This includes documentation of labour market opportunities for and risks/barriers (such as discrimination) against migrant workers. Migration can be a burden or a benefit to public finances – skill and age composition matters. In the UK, studies show that households headed by

migrants contribute more than they receive. It highlights the importance of having social protection that complements labour market policies.

Research has an important role to play. There is scope to better monitor processes and outcomes; to analyse the institutional arrangements and opportunities for strengthening the social protection system, coordination with humanitarian action and alignment efforts; and to generate more evidence on what works, to support effective policy and system development for extending social protection to displaced persons.

In summary, experiences from Turkey and other countries, as well as global research, around the inclusion of refugees into government social protection systems underline a few enabling, replicable factors, as well as challenges and risks. These includes:

- **Avoiding setting up a parallel system;**
- **Criticalness of pre-existing systems for timely and effective scale up** – This has implications for development policies, to help build systems so that they are available when a crisis hits. This work can be informed by existing lessons on the types of information management systems we need to build, the requirements of these systems for targeting, as well as financial systems.
- **Considering social protection more broadly**, looking in particular at the linkages between the social assistance component and the other broader components of social protection, for States to meet their obligations and commitments under the international laws and treaties given varying domestic political and public support – In Turkey, the government made the decision to give refugees the right to work. This has been an important step. This is another key area, alongside social assistance/social services, for improving resilience.
- **Clarifying objectives of a programme** – We need to decide our options based on the context: is it long-term or short-term, is it relief and then return vs. staying long term and full integration?
- **Considering and mitigating risks related to social cohesion** – taking into account the current access of host communities to social protection; the value of assistance being provided to them vs. to refugees; and taking actions to perhaps bring them on board too.
- **Supporting actions that make these things sustainable over time;**
- **Ensuring long-term engagement** – Long-term planning is important.

Social cohesion appears as a key underlying theme; social protection can improve cohesion but there are also risks to be aware of. In Turkey, this was addressed but it always can be improved. In other contexts, such as Mali, local populations may be reluctant and not always positive towards refugees. In Chad, the government works on the issue of refugees from Sudan and other countries. They do their best but have tensions and problems with local populations (such as, environmental issues, share of land, etc.). Generally refugees are living in camps but this isn't fitting the local culture. Some are living with host families. The government recently made an attempt to create a safety net system and is thinking to include refugees too, since they are bringing their knowledge and experience. Some have spent a long time – 15 years or so – in the country. These people do not want to live in camps; they want to be integrated and to participate. Judith's testimonial and the Turkish experience show that refugees feel integrated when they have shelter, and when they can begin to be part of society and contribute. We need support to get there. We also need to take into account the percentage of the national population who are benefiting from the national social protection system. In the case of the ESSN, 17 centres had to be opened to serve only Syrians. Some citizens were saying 'these people have come and are taking our assistance'. There have been conflicts and challenges. There is a tendency not to include refugees. It is about the social structure of the society. We cannot pretend it hasn't been challenging. Most Syrians are Arabs, but in the southeast part of the country there is some kinship between Syrians and Turkish nationals. There are also the cases of criminality and extradition cases. They always hit the news. The level of tensions is also context specific. While in Chad refugees tend to live in families, in Turkey, only 8 per cent of the refugees are in camps, and the rest are in Turkish communities but living in their own family groups – not really being hosted. For people who are staying a long

time and integrating into Turkey, they have the IT system, which can monitor all registered households. When they get formal employment and formal salary they will become ineligible for the ESSN.

2.2.3 PARALLEL SESSION 2C

Chair: **Dr Andrew Mitchell**, Senior Solutions Officer, Social Protection and Resilience, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Farrokh Sasani, Deputy Director General, Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Iran

Byron Alfonso Romero Peña, Sub Secretary for Family Matters, Ministry of Social and Economic Inclusion, Ecuador & Maria Clara Martin, Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR Quito, Ecuador

Dr Amber Peterman, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti

Dr Ugo Gentilini, Senior Economist, Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice, World Bank

Effective social protection for displaced persons in urban setting

There is an increased trend in displaced populations being urbanised, but safety nets are still more focused on rural than urban areas. There is a general march toward urbanization across the world and people increasingly moved toward cities. Forced displacement is accelerating the urbanization of poverty. Today, 60-70 per cent of refugees find themselves in urban contexts, not camps; a trend that looks destined to continue. This is raising new questions of how to combat poverty—namely through social protection—in urban areas. Counter-intuitively, the urban poor are less likely to receive social assistance than the rural poor. This could be due to disparities between poverty in urban and rural areas (a lower poverty rate in urban areas typically than in rural ones), but other factors may also be at play. Urbanisation now looms large as a critical dimension of providing social protection to displaced populations.

Assistance to the forcibly displaced remains heavily focused on refugees living in camps, despite the fact that the large majority of refugees live in urban settings (e.g. in countries like Jordan). It is only a quarter of refugees who live in camps. The rest are in settlements, and 60 per cent are in urban contexts. It was suggested that refugees residing in camps are more vulnerable, with more limited income generation and other opportunities, compared with refugees residing in urban settings. The jurisdiction of humanitarian actors is also more widely recognized in camps than in urban settings, concentrating assistance operations in camps.

Social protection instruments/policies need to be further adapted to the complexities of the urban reality. This urban gravitation generates very specific needs and challenges. It presupposes the development of social protection provision suited to these circumstances in receiving countries. Urban areas are complex settings with different vulnerability profiles (incl. the homeless) and complex living arrangements (e.g. apartment blocks not households – where does a family live, how is the household unit defined). There are emerging urban design and implementation issues, including the definition of household, community and other units, and how assessments based upon those designations identify eligible social protection beneficiaries. Outreach and communication on programmes to target urban populations may also require rethinking. There may be more geographic mobility within urban areas, requiring more frequent updating of data used for targeting of programmes. Several innovative adjustments to programmes operating in urban areas have been used to improve programme performance, including roving identification and distribution centres, mobile phone payments and others.

We need to unpack what we mean by 'city' according to the nature and impact of the displacement. For example, localised vs. dispersed, existence or not of camps in cities, scale of displacement vs. size of the population, all these factors impact on service delivery and burden. There are different stresses, localized or widespread, experienced by cities caused by displacement, which much be considered. The amount of infrastructure damaged caused by armed conflict and presence of urban refugee camps also creates different challenges for operating social protection programmes in urban and forced displacement settings. As a result, there are specific lessons to be learned and innovations that can be replicated which are highly relevant for social protection practitioners working in urban and forced displacement settings.

We need to adapt and be aware of how the host government is already dealing with urban issues/planning.

Two populations (host and displaced) live together. We need policy and instruments that take this into account. As such, working at the municipal level might be more appropriate than focusing solely on the national social protection system. Striking an equitable balance between assistance for refugees and host populations remains an important question, particularly in locations where social protection guarantees for nationals and social services infrastructure remain limited. Some efforts in countries like Lebanon and Ethiopia may shed light on how to address this.

There are some good practices emerging but no systematic evidence/practices on how programmes and policies need to adapt. In Iran, refugees are integrated into the national schemes to access health and education services.

- Iran's government has been providing services to refugees for 37 years, and priorities are education, health and livelihoods. Nearly 3 million refugees are present in all provinces and are highly urbanized, majorly from Afghanistan and Iraq. Today, refugees have access to preventative, free-of-charge primary health care countrywide. Refugees also have access to the national Universal Public Health Insurance (*Bimeh Salamat*) scheme since 2015—the same scheme in which Iranian nationals participate. For the last three years, refugees also have access to education services, regardless of their documentation status or that of their parents.
- The extension of *Bimeh Salamat* was made to all Iranians in 2014. Some budgetary support was provided by the UNHCR to support the enrolment of refugees with the requisite documentation in the programme. So far, the inclusion of refugees is being carried out in phases beginning with extension of coverage for hospitalization services to refugees in 2015, and of secondary and tertiary health care services in two 12-month cycles, in an initial 2016-2017 cycle and a second 2017-2018 cycle. Refugees are responsible for paying part of their health insurance premiums, which are subsidized by the Government of Iran. For certain vulnerable groups of refugees (approximately 100,000), the UNHCR provides additional premium support. All refugees enjoy similar coverage as nationals.
- Access to affordable health coverage for refugees has positive impacts within Iranian society in terms of preventing poverty and vulnerability at large and reducing public health risks by removing barriers to care. The programme faces some challenges, however, including improving awareness and promoting a culture of health insurance among refugees. Financial incentives are needed for refugees to seek out and pay for health insurance, for those with the means to pay. The coverage term also remains relatively short (12 months, currently), and could perhaps be extended to promote retention of refugees in the programme.

Integrating the management of natural-disaster-related risk into a lifecycle approach to social protection remains a challenge. In Ecuador, the legislation was revised to include those affected by displacement and disasters. There is some evidence on how this can impact positively on social cohesion.

- Over 226,000 refugees have fled to Ecuador since 1989, 90 per cent of them come from Colombia. More than half have been in Ecuador for more than 10 years. Despite the recent peace agreement between the Colombian government and rebel forces, people continue to flee. No refugee camps are in Ecuador, and refugee populations are integrated among host communities.
- The general social protection system provides support to 400,000 Ecuadorian households or 1.3 million individuals with the Human Development Grant (HDG). The HDG is available to mothers living in poverty and families with people with disabilities whose receipt is conditioned upon compliance with certain health and education requirements. Currently 471,500 elderly people receive a cash grant, and 2,485 elderly persons receive an improved grant through the "My Best Years Programme." Over 100,000 individuals with disabilities receive cash grants, including 22,000 children. Also, 20,000 caregivers of children with severe disabilities receive cash grants through the "Joaquin Gallegos Lara" programme. Other programmes help beneficiaries access mobile phone service, and there is progress in improving

access to health insurance for participants in other social protection programmes. Natural risks such as nearby active volcanoes and recurrent earthquakes pose additional risks to the Ecuadorian population.

- The Ecuadorian constitution grants the same rights to refugees as Ecuadorians. However, not all service providers and employers recognize the refugee and asylum seeker ID to register refugees in social protection programmes. A new draft law seeks to rectify this to ensure their enrolment in social protection programmes and accessing legal employment, bank accounts, and other services. Entrenched discrimination against refugees remains a challenge to their social inclusion. Conducting awareness-raising activities and training of social protection staff to recognize the refugee card and combat discrimination can combat this discrimination.
- A new pilot project will attempt to provide common support to refugee communities and Ecuadorians by the UNHCR with the aim of eventually handing over programme assets for eventual take-up and administration by the government.

There are other outcomes that we could aim for beyond poverty reduction or social protection outcomes.

Evidence from Ecuador, for instance, shows that peace and gender outcomes that can be attached. An impact evaluation of a cash, food and voucher programme for Colombian refugees and host populations in urban settings in northern Ecuador has revealed some interesting benefits of such programmes for women and other participants. The programme was operational in 7 urban centres, and was targeted to women (76 per cent of total beneficiaries), although some men were still eligible; nutrition education trainings were also part of the programme. The impacts of food transfers on food security indicators were somewhat more significant than those of other transfers like cash and vouchers. However, vouchers and cash remain more cost-effective to deliver. Impacts on intimate partner violence were also significant among programme participants, with no significant differences experienced among those who received food, cash or vouchers. Programme participants attributed the improvement to a reduction in conflict over scarce resources. Other improvements were noted in promoting individuals' agency, their confidence in state institutions and sense of social cohesion. Interestingly, the improvements cited in social participation were reported in greater number among refugees than Ecuadorian participants.

2.3 PLENARY SESSION 2

Watch recording: [English](#) | [Français](#) | [العربية](#)

Moderator: **Ewen Macleod**, Senior Adviser for Development, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Arthur van Diesen, Regional Adviser, Social Policy, UNICEF Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

Dr Francesca Bastagli, Head of Social Protection and Social Policy Programme, Overseas Development Institute

Valérie Schmitt, Deputy Director and Head of the Flagship Programme, Social Protection Department, International Labour Organization (ILO)

Emily Henderson, Humanitarian Adviser and Global Emergency Cash Transfers Lead, Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department (CHASE), Department for International Development of the United Kingdom (DFID)

Forcibly-displaced populations and the role of social protection: lessons learned and moving forward

A number of key themes are emerging:

- The big crises and challenges generate under pressure opportunities for learning and innovation (as highlighted in the cases of Lebanon and Turkey);
- A challenge that affect all of us is how to effect the transition from the short-term, immediate imperative of alleviating suffering to managing the more longer-term (and developmental) needs;
- It is important everywhere to take into account context – economic, social and political aspects; urban vs. rural; types of city – to crafting a vision to make that transition;
- A theme that runs through all of this is how to identify the vulnerabilities, and adapt the interventions to address these;

- Operationalizing this, it is extremely important to look at delivery systems that exist and consider how to use and adapt these, and avoid fragmentation – this can be done by engaging with government systems, but this is a big challenge for them to take on these responsibilities in the short term.
- Again, each context is unique, and we have to be flexible and adaptable if we are going to meet this challenge of transitioning from the short term to the longer term.

From the perspective of a development agency, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO):

- **It is important to underline the existence of international standards.** The ILO supports the development of sustainable social protection systems in its 187 member countries based on standards (conventions and recommendations) adopted by member states at the international level. These help to shape these systems based on common values, such as the right to social protection, and guiding principles, notably:
 - Social protection needs to be enshrined in law.
 - This is important for ensuring continuity and financial sustainability
 - There is a need for clear and proper governance, with contributions not only from the government but also from those contributing and those benefiting from these social protection systems.
- **Development actors have a role to play; there is a real need to link humanitarian and development efforts.** For example, the ILO and the UNHCR, two very different animals, set up an alliance to work on this nexus, from short- and long-term perspective.
- **On the issue of graduation and independence, it is important to emphasise the right to work.** It is critical for refugees, who can then contribute to society, economy, and the development of social security systems. In Uganda, for instance, refugees have this right to work: 120,000 work permits were distributed in 2016, and refugees have the right to be included in the contributory system.

From the perspective of a humanitarian donor, such as DFID:

- **Learning from the social protection side has implications for humanitarian programming and how we do humanitarian cash transfers:**
 - Perfect is the enemy of the good. It is not all or nothing, either perfect social protection or nothing. It is not only about alignment or piggybacking or integration, but also what about those contexts where there is no system? Also, is it really about transitioning from short term to long term, or rather learning from long-term programmes/ways to tackle long-term issues to address short-term needs? Do humanitarian tools have to be short-term tools? There will be a continuum of approaches, especially in those places where there is no social protection system in place. The question is: What can we do to build even a transitional system?
 - What can we, as humanitarians, learn from the social protection community and body of knowledge to design our programmes? ‘Humanitarian’ doesn’t have to mean only social transfer tools.
 - We need to use plans/systems that exist in country, linking to national development plans.
 - We need to think across agency mandates – cash gives people the choice. We need coordination to be more than just sharing what we are doing/aggregation. It is about harmonised analysis and coherent programming.
 - Preparedness planning for this work is crucial. We shall begin with single transfers, as part of a broader and cross-sectoral response.
- **So to the question of how emerging lessons from this field can inform discussions of changing the way humanitarian aid is conceived and delivered in humanitarian settings (esp. protracted settings), we can see a few pragmatic opportunities:**

- [Grand Bargain](#) commitments – They agree to increase the use of cash, and they include links to social protection. There are work streams on cash transfer programming, on the humanitarian-development nexus and on needs assessment, where this is discussed and where we can bring learning on social protection to the agenda.
- Donor coordination – We are part of the fragmentation and we can also contribute to reduce it. The [Good Humanitarian Donorship](#) initiative is around thinking about greater coherence on donors.
- Iraq – A group of donors came together to reflect on what could be improved and coordinated better from the donor side, on cash.
- Funding – What can we learn about the costs and benefits (value for money) of this new approach, what is the evidence that we can use today? We desperately need this to inform the evolution of this approach and the development of donor instruments.

From the perspective of an agency operating across humanitarian and development work, such as UNICEF:

- **Practical reality** – The ideal situation we would like to have eventually is that we have a national system in place ahead of crisis that is shock-responsive – so any humanitarian response can be rolled out through that system – or at least that we have a good understanding of the extent to which the national system is not ready to integrate that response, of the strengths and weaknesses of this system so we can know if/how to use it and how to contribute to the continuity of or the strengthening of this system. But the reality is that we don't have this now. To address this situation, there are a few nuts and bolts we could fix in the humanitarian system.
 - In most countries where we work on social protection system strengthening, there will be a development partner coordination group on this. Then when an emergency hits this group stops and all the focus goes to the response, and response-oriented coordination groups spring up – typically focused on cash. So we need to have coordination groups/donor-funded platforms that facilitate analysis and coordination across the nexus (and beyond cash transfers).
 - In health, education, WASH (water and sanitation and hygiene), we have system assessment tools. But what about social protection? We haven't seen these. These need developing.
 - There are humanitarian coordination groups on health, education, WASH, but where is social protection in all this? We need a humanitarian coordination group.
- **Political economy reality** – why would donors invest in this type of social protection response:
 - The dialogue that we have with donors is around 'if we give you money for social protection, can we stop the migration flow' but the answer needs to be a resounding no. It is an illusion to think that the response we give is going to significantly influence the migration decision. Those who are able to make this journey are those who have the resources to do so.
 - However there is a different, very important investment case to be made for social protection, on a much longer-term horizon, which is around building social cohesion, stability and prosperity in the countries of origin. We need to be clear on that narrative.

From a research, learning and evidence perspective,

- **There are overlaps and differences between social protection and humanitarian assistance.** The social protection life-cycle approach and conceptualisation has implications for how we consider the extension of, and extent of, social protection to displaced populations. It depends on length of displacement and plans for return/repatriation vs. integration.
- **There are different ways in which research on social protection can help:**
 - There are relevant lessons from the shock-responsive social protection research on macroeconomic shocks and natural disasters: i) how to design/implement/adapt relevant systems that facilitate scale up; ii) contingency financing; iii) analysis of institutional arrangements – how to strengthen these.

- Lessons can be drawn from impact studies on social protection programmes (including for refugees), which show clear impact on poverty and human development. This tells us about how the targeting approach, value and duration of assistance matter.
- There is evidence on the potential of an effect on social cohesion – social integration, social contract, improvements to service delivery, and increased willingness to pay taxes. This has implications for the integration of refugees.
- There is evidence of the unintended effects of social protection. We need to pay attention to these, to anticipate, monitor and address negative effects (social tensions, resentment – where differential treatment or perceptions of unfair/inequitable treatment). This should be guided by principles of fairness and equity.
- There is a body of literature identifying the barriers to participation in formal social protection for migrant labourers, and the integration of migrant labourers into labour markets, as well as how to address these barriers including discrimination, how to facilitate the integration of these groups into the labour market. There is also evidence from net immigration countries on whether migrants are a burden or contributors to the fiscal system/public services. On the basis of this, we can dispel the myths around migration.

With all the points above in mind, a few aspects are worth clarifying:

- **How to ensure the drive to include migrants/refugees in work does not run the risk of labour exploitation?** We need to promote the labour laws for decent work, which include four elements: it needs to be work that gives them safe conditions; a chance of earning a fair wage; career progression opportunity (training, etc.) and access to social security; and the chance to raise/voice concerns.
- **How does the value-for-money imperative change if additional outcomes for cash transfers/social protection are included** (e.g. beyond income support to consider also risk management, social cohesion, protection, reducing migration flows, etc.)? Cash is and should be part of a holistic response. It shouldn't be considered as a siloed project, which is what we tend to do right now in humanitarian responses. We should see the bigger picture of the needs, and the overall design. Then cash is a part of the response strategy that can contribute to all these varied outcomes. And we are looking at the most cost-effective ways to do this. We also need to consider what we are measuring, what are our outcomes.
- **How to change the humanitarian architecture and develop the tools to enable this, in a harmonised way?** Let's look at the existing tools, from both the humanitarian and development sides, and develop tools that draw from these and fill the gaps. For instance, market analysis and assessment tools from the humanitarian side will be relevant but need adaptation. There is probably no need for a new body but need to bring in people from both domains of expertise.
- **How to do this in insecure/conflict areas?** We need investment in third party monitoring, and even (in conflict) fourth party monitoring. There are issues of access – how to mediate this. This requires different ways of working. In addition, one should also consider the rights to social protection – how to ensure these. The rights-based approach should form the basis, because if it is just considered a hand out then in conflict it will just disappear. Whereas if it is perceived as a right, people and providers find solutions. For instance, in Ukraine, people consider it a right to access their pensions. So we need to find ways that they can access it across the conflict lines.
- **How to ensure this in contexts where resources are scarce?** Worse than low benefits are insecure/unpredictable benefits. In the case of the UNICEF child grant in Jordan, evidence shows that the value isn't the beneficiaries' main concern; rather it is whether they can rely on it into the future. If they could you would see different investment decisions. So it is better to be modest and realistic to ensure continuity. But how to align this with humanitarian needs? The [Social Protection Floor](#) is about progressively building. It is made up of four main guarantees a country needs to work progressively as

fiscal space builds. Generally governments begin with one of these pillars and build this first, e.g. social services/pension, extending to others and then progressively build in the other guarantees over time.

2.4 SPEED NETWORKING SESSION 2

Read session abstracts on pp. 21-25 of the [Conference programme](#)

Moderator: **Yukimi Ogaki**, Programme Policy Officer, Safety-Nets & Social Protection Unit, Policy & Programme Division, World Food Programme (WFP)

1. **Federico Spano**, Social Protection and Resilience Specialist, Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) — *Risk-Informed and Shock-Responsive Social Protection Interactive Learning Tool*
2. **Dr Jean Robert Brutus**, Senior Adviser on Social Protection, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, Haiti — *Social Safety Nets as a Response to Hurricane Matthew in October 2016 in Haiti's South and Grand'Anse Departments*
3. **Charles Knox-Vydmanov**, Global Adviser, Social Protection, HelpAge International — *Universal Pension Systems in Fragile Contexts – Something Unique?*
4. **Dr Fatima Fadul**, Head of Poverty Reduction and Coordination Centre, Ministry of Security and Social Development, Sudan — *Rethinking Sudan's Social Safety Net Programme*
5. **Dr Chrystelle Tsafack Temah**, Chief Social Policy, UNICEF Mali — *Delivering Social Protection during a Protracted Crisis: Challenges in Mali*
6. **Karolina Lindholm Billing**, Deputy Representative, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Lebanon — *Ensuring Protection Dividends for Social Transfers Serving Forcibly-Displaced Persons*
7. **Dr Günther Taube**, Programme Director, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH — *Qudra – Increasing the Resilience of Host Communities in Neighbouring Countries during the Syrian Refugee Crisis*
8. **Berhanu Woldemichael**, Director, Food Security Coordination Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture, Ethiopia — *A New Way of Working – Linkages between the Humanitarian Response and the Productive Safety Net in Ethiopia*
9. **Mito Tsukamoto**, Senior Specialist, Employment Intensive Investments, Employment Policy, International Labour Organization (ILO) — *From Fragility to Resilience through Sustainable Approaches in Public Works*

2.5 HIGH-LEVEL PANEL 2

Watch recording: [English](#) | [Français](#) | [العربية](#)

Moderator: **Leila Pakkala**, Regional Director, UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO)

Andreas Proksch, Director General, Sector and Global Programme Department, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Minister Maryan Qasim, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, Somalia

Dominique Burgeon, Director of Emergency and Rehabilitation Division and Strategic Programme Leader – Resilience, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Jean-Louis De Brouwer, Director of Europe, Eastern Neighbourhood and Middle East, European Commission's Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)

Larissa Pelham, Global Adviser and Social Protection Lead, Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods, Global Humanitarian Team, Oxfam

Translating lessons into practice

Social protection is a basic right that is instrumental in helping both individuals and their communities mitigate risks, reduce negative coping mechanisms, protect livelihoods and assets, and work to best integrate displaced populations – this is the premise behind this conference. It is very clear that this does not happen by default.

- There must be deliberate efforts to bring humanitarian and development focus on social protection much more closely together in order to meet the needs of not just some affected groups but all affected populations, including refugees and forcibly displaced populations.
- Social protection interventions must be credible – what might look like social protection may not be social protection. The focus must be on building shock-responsive and resilient social protection systems. Work must start before emergencies, and social protection must have long-term financing strategies to go with it.

- Numerous examples of social protection in action and evidence brought to the table by government and other development partners have shown that it is possible to take significant steps and have significant results to expand social protection at country level. We have also seen that there are many tools that we are using in humanitarian responses (including management and information systems, payment mechanisms, etc.) that can be used to help build national social protection systems. In some ways, we have been focusing here on some of the most challenging and complex contexts in the world today, and yet have been showing that it is possible to have impressive and innovative work that is delivering results for people. It is happening every day.

A number of messages stand out in the draft outcome document:

- A reaffirmation that the role of social protection as a natural bridge to bring humanitarian action and development programming is a must;
- A commitment to put, and to make sure everybody puts, people in the centre of all our work in strengthening social protection systems, emphasizing both inclusion and a human rights-based approach;
- A recognition and agreement that has been repeated over and over to further support government-led action to make progress towards social protection commitments;
- A determination to make sure that we collectively use humanitarian interventions as a window of opportunity to trigger investments in developing longer-term sustained social protection systems;
- A conclusion that it is possible to design and implement cost-effective, predictably resourced and sustainable social protection systems that are both appropriate for protracted and complex contexts and also situations of displacement.

Moving forward, there are a number of principles and key actions that stands out, namely the importance of:

- Building on emergency response structures in order to develop nascent social protection systems – It is possible to build on humanitarian responses with that longer-term perspective and it is a must;
- Expanding coverage of existing systems both to be risk-informed and to be shock-responsive;
- Improving linkages between development and humanitarian actors and processes and alignment with broader national programmes – repeatedly the linkages with social services and the importance of coordination have come up in our discussions;
- Building resilience of both national systems and people, and doing this inclusively;
- Supporting national ownership in planning and implementation of short-term, medium-term and longer-term social protection measures, focusing on alignment with those other programmes that exist at national level (including services) and a focus on insuring sustainability.

From the perspective of the government of a fragile, conflict-affected country, there are a few important aspects we need to keep in mind moving forward, collectively:

- Social protection is a way to provide not only social assistance but also hope.
- In crises, we cannot solely focus on the immediate needs, we also need to understand and address the root causes, and social protection is a key element to do this.
- Discussions held during this conference have underlined:
 - The importance of a strong and supportive relationship between government and donors – the need for partnership and collaboration including government, local civil society, host communities, beneficiaries, United Nations agencies, donors and all development partners is particularly true because most cases of crisis are not temporary;

- The importance to commit together to make decisions and adopt approaches from the perspective of achieving long-term objectives – strong social protection systems can play a role in responding to shocks, and indeed social protection can be the bridge to longer-term development objectives;
- The importance to prioritise support to developing programmes at scale, not a multiplicity of small-scale projects;
- The need to develop flexible financing mechanisms between government and donors to be able to cope with crises in a timely and efficient way;
- The need to be conscious that we cannot waste time, especially in cases of displacement – necessary reforms need to be pushed forward quickly to ensure both host communities and refugees receive the required support before conditions deteriorate.
- Looking at the case of Somalia,
 - There are no refugees, but a large community of internally displaced people; we need specific discussions on how to tackle this.
 - In order to build sustainable national social protection systems in Somalia, it is important to build on: i) informal, traditional solidarity mechanisms (including remittances); ii) current cash-based humanitarian responses; and iii) investment made in ensuring access to basic social services and livelihoods opportunities.
 - The government of Somalia is committed to building a social protection system, but is confronted to issues met in many similar country contexts: political instability and insecurity.
 - Coordination is essential, under government leadership, and support from donors and development partners is essential.
 - This work is to be considered as a process, rather than an outcome, over the next 10-15 years. To do so, it's important to get a variety of actors commit to long-term, multi-year support, notably to help build capacity at federal as well as state level.
 - It is time to act, not repeating the mistakes from the past. Today all the elements to establish a nationally led social protection system are there: political will is there, donor commitment is there, and implementing partners' capacity is there. Let's not miss this opportunity.

There are a few messages a group of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) would like to promote coming out of this conference:

- NGOs are well placed to document what is happening and help build learning and evidence. It is about finding those small entry points – as documented, opportunities exist even in crisis – building on what exists, and documenting it to take this forward. It is about transitioning, and NGOs are well placed, as they already operate programmes that cross over humanitarian and development.
- We need to get the financing right, we need to get that sorted: year-on-year financing limits NGOs' ability to do things, and scope to experiment; global financing frameworks are also needed, with pre-positioned global fund to respond, scale up safety nets when triggers are met.
- Many national social safety nets are built on humanitarian NGO interventions (including Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme and Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme). The call is to utilise NGOs more to do that, to let NGOs experiment. NGOs are agile and more flexible than many other actors; they can work at a more responsive scale.
- NGOs have the connection to civil society and can help engage with civil society, which is needed to ensure sustainability and make social protection systems work.

- Collaboration is critical, and it is possible to build on the experience of the Collaborative Cash Delivery (CCD) Platform (set up by a group of NGOs) to improve on (assessment, delivery and monitoring) tools together.
- We need to build on what exists, looking at both the formal and the informal sectors. It is crucial not to undermine informal social protection systems (remittances, burial societies, savings and loans groups, etc.). There is evidence that shows how important and resilient these systems are. These represent opportunities, and it is important to engage with civil society to understand them, build on them and not undermine them.
- We need several different work streams moving forward. We need to break down this terminology of fragility and forced displacement, looking separately at fragile contexts, contexts of displacement, and contexts of armed conflict – there will be different mechanisms needed in each of these contexts, although no blueprint.
- We need to identify a few focus countries where there is appetite from the government and/or development partners.
- What we don't want to see is the development of a humanitarian social protection system. We really want to see the building of a proper, comprehensive social protection system – meaning bringing the humanitarian response side within the social protection floors, and integrating the response to shocks in social protection systems.

From the perspective of a humanitarian donor, we cannot wait until a fully-fledged and stabilised blueprint is established. We need to be learning by doing. We owe to ourselves to ensure the sustainability not only of the social protection agenda, but also of the work of these two days. How do we keep this alive? There are a series of initiatives already going on, and it is not about reinventing the wheel. It is about building on these two days and taking a more systematic approach.

- The advice is to set up jointly an inventory of what is being done, of the collective knowledge, about promoting the social protection agenda in the humanitarian aid world of 21st century. Let's then see what is missing, and if existing initiative can be reshuffled to fill the gaps.
- Specifically, the European Commission has engaged in the development of a guidance note on how to bring together development financing streams and a bit of humanitarian seed money to promote a context-specific social protection agenda when relevant and in close cooperation with the government and its partners – flexible financing is a challenge for governments but also for donors. Collaboration with others will be essential to benefit from their wisdom in further elaborating this guidance note, which is envisioned as a living document. At a certain point in time, this is meant to become a European Union (EU) approach, establishing the principles guiding our interventions and the ways to translate them into action. This is an EU-led process but not a closed process.

From the perspective of a development cooperation agency,

- We made a major progress with this [outcome document](#), which:
 - Supports the reaffirmation and operationalization of existing commitments to social protection in fragile contexts;
 - Gives a strong emphasis on the central role of host governments and a clear statement that local systems, at national and local levels, are to be reinforced, and not replaced by international actors – they are to be owned and initiated by the governments of those countries;
 - Emphasises the absolute need, even in very difficult circumstances, to focus on longer-term and strategic thinking;

- Represents a major step forward in the new paradigm of building the bridge between humanitarian and development aid actors.
- Two important points on our way forward:
 - We talked about extremely interesting and promising experiences in countries like Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and many other countries able to cope with refugees and sudden instability imported into these countries. But these are functioning countries with functioning governments. We talked very little about what we can do in much more fragile situations, like Syria and Iraq, where the needs are tremendous. To be honest, the international community has not so much to offer in regard to what to do under such circumstances. We need to invest more brain and creativity on how we deal with absolutely disastrous situations in countries under desperate needs.
 - The contribution from the humanitarian, development, domestic government in host countries are extremely impressive. However, the resources will not be sufficient to solve the issue on their own; they need strong partners. Engaging with the domestic and international private sector appears key, notably to allow access for refugees to the labour market in host countries, links to the (domestic and international) banking system, and links to the insurance system (e.g. for climate-related insurance). Out there, there is a lot of money and a lot of experiences. Let's call the private sector in; we will need them.

From the perspective of the United Nations family,

- **The rationale for working** on this issue is very clear, and emphasised again by the very worrisome [State of Food and Agriculture \(SOFA\)](#) report issued two weeks ago, which reveals that: for the first time, the declining trend in the number of undernourished people is being reversed (up to 815 million people in 2017); the majority of these people (60 per cent) are in conflict-affected contexts; and 75 per cent of the 175 million stunted children are in these contexts. We cannot continue business as usual. From the perspective of food security, this discussion is very relevant and timely.
- The government is to be at the centre of the equation. We need to support the political will when it is there (such as in Somalia), and we need to work towards creating this political will in other contexts.
- We need to build on systems that have demonstrating results. Risk-informed, shock-responsive systems have proven their efficiency in a number of contexts, like Ethiopia, Lesotho, and the Philippines.
- We need to continue to be innovative. In that respect, this forum bringing together humanitarian and development people is an opportunity we cannot miss. Humanitarians have the capacity to bring very practical, concrete solutions on which we need to build; and we need to partner with development partners to support nascent social protection systems in a number of countries.
- We need innovation but we also need those traditional systems that have been playing a central role in so many countries, on which we need to build, and which we need to strengthen as in many cases they are being overwhelmed.
- Looking at contexts of displacement, we of course need to look at the needs of both displaced and host communities, ensuring both have access to basic services. We need to support host countries in developing mechanisms that can support and enhance the development of their communities, while providing opportunities for new comers. These opportunities mean access to basic services as well as development of portable skills, which is fundamental to effectively support livelihoods, including agriculture-based livelihoods.
- The fact that we have had the humanitarians, development actors, governments and civil society working together on this is already an achievement in itself. There have been all sorts of discussions around the 'new way of working', linking humanitarian and development, and the peace nexus. When we are talking about collective outcomes, here we have a very concrete subject on which we need to work and on

which, if we manage to deliver together, we will have shown that this humanitarian-development-peace nexus was not an utopia.

- Social protection is not only about poverty reduction. It is very important to recognise that it is also an opportunity to build resilience and to save lives and livelihoods.
- The role of social protection to build social cohesion is an important dimension that needs to be factored in.
- We need to be ambitious in the long term, realistic in the short term, and keep innovating. This is what will bring us forward.

A few additional burning issues were expressed, including:

- HIV is not mentioned in the draft outcome document, yet HIV has been the foundation of social protection in some countries (notable in Southern Africa);
- We need the beneficiary voices;
- We should do better in terms of internal coordination within our organisations, between humanitarian and development teams;
- The issue of social workers is not strongly reflected in the draft outcome document, yet a way to link the work of humanitarian and development actors;
- We should not make social protection system as a humanitarian thing but as a comprehensive thing. In Somalia, a study showed that resilience/social protection means to people “saving the last goat”. So anything we do must be very context-specific.
- Mali is organising a conference on social protection on 24-25-26 October 2017 to discuss all of the different key issues raised during this conference (including social protection floor, health, agriculture, unified social registry, adaptive social protection, financing).

To conclude, we need a system-oriented approach and context-specific action. We should not lose sight of the use of entry points to build nascent social protection systems. We should emphasise the importance of having a strategic long-term and comprehensive approach, supporting coordination and alignment.

2.6 CLOSING REMARKS

Watch recording: [English](#) | [Français](#) | [العربية](#)

Sarah Laughton, Chief, Safety Nets & Social Protection Unit, Policy & Programme Division, World Food Programme (WFP)

Juergen Hohmann, Social Protection Expert, European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)

Eppu Mikkonen-Jeanneret, Senior Adviser for Global Social Policy, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Thanks and closure from the Conference Technical Working Group

We see a strong commitment to support the building of systems. We are in a completely different world from where we were ten years ago, a world where even the least developed countries are investing significant amounts of their own money in building social protection systems. This points to a very different role for development partners, as they need to focus more on systems—on the building of resilient systems, and not just ‘do good things’—and sometimes call them ‘social protection’. Collectively, development partners have some knowledge on how to design and adjust policies so as to better respond to shocks, and on how to manage the nuts and bolts of programmes. This knowledge is to be deployed in the service of a government’s vision. Such a vision exists in many countries, and where it does not, governments can count on development partners to support the development of such a vision, as necessary and as governments wish.

Holding the vision of universal social protection is really critical, as well as holding of life-course approach and looking at the risks we face across our lives, also in contexts of fragility and forced displacement. Linked to that is the recognition of outcomes beyond poverty. We need not to forget about the words of social cohesion, security, dignity and hope we heard throughout the conference. Fragmented social protection is going to deliver fragmented social contract, or no social contract at all. We need to have one or more indicators that keep us focused on the building of social protection systems over the long-term—that is, maintaining a 40-year perspective, not just a 5-year one. This could mean having humanitarian action laying the ground for a long-term pension system. The next step will then be to sustain efforts and make universal social protection a reality.

We need to keep working together as we have. The high demand and turnout is a clear signal that this is an issue that is extremely timely and important. The momentum behind social protection has been tremendously energising and very unifying. We have limited resources that we need to use most efficiently. We need to think new things, and we can't think new things on our own.

There is also a call to maintain a SPIAC-B³ working group to keep supporting this important agenda of social protection in crisis contexts. 'How linking social protection and humanitarian action can bridge the humanitarian-development divide' is the credo of this conference, and the name of the [SPIAC-B](#) joint statement that was presented at the [World Humanitarian Summit](#) 2016. This [SPIAC-B](#) initiative laid the ground for this conference, which was co-organised by several development partners. We need this group of people to sustain their support, and we need [SPIAC-B](#) as a global mechanism that brings forward that topic. This request will be raised at the next [SPIAC-B](#) meeting.

³ The Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) was established in 2012 in response to a request from the G20 that called upon international organizations that provide social protection financing and technical advisory services to developing countries to improve coordination of their efforts. The Board is co-chaired by the ILO and the World Bank and includes in its membership several agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations, international financial institutions and bilateral development agencies.

2.7 ANNEX 1: CONFERENCE OUTCOME DOCUMENT

BACKGROUND:

In the past few years the international community has agreed on important **global commitments** to address poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion through the development of social protection systems including floors as well as effective response to crises. These commitments from the International Labour Conference, Sustainable Development Goals, World Humanitarian Summit, New York declaration on refugees and migrants and the 2016 political declaration on HIV and AIDS (See Annex) emphasise the need to 'leave no one behind' and to 'work towards common outcomes in humanitarian and development programming' including through social protection.

The **International Conference** brought together governments, international and bilateral organizations, civil society and researchers from 40 countries to discuss concrete and technical implementation of the international commitments. Conference participants discussed the potential of social protection systems in crises; options to develop new and preserve as well as expand the coverage of existing social protection systems in fragile contexts. They also explored the role of social protection to mitigate the impacts of mass displacement on host communities, while predictably meeting the needs of people displaced over the long-term. The Conference contributed to the ongoing discussions on the role of social protection in humanitarian and development programming and provided the following recommendations for implementing existing international commitments around "leaving no one behind" and working towards common outcomes in humanitarian and development programming:

1. RECOMMENDATION TO IMPLEMENT THE GLOBAL COMMITMENTS:

Participants of the International Conference, submit the following recommendations. These are enshrined in a **common vision to implement social protection** in contexts of fragility and forced displacement:

- People are at the centre of strengthening social protection systems, following an inclusive and rights-based approach throughout the lifecycle
- Governments take significant actions to expand and strengthen social protection systems including floors in their countries and are supported by the international community in this endeavour;
- Humanitarian interventions undertaken in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, are used as a window of opportunity to maintain and enhance existing social protection systems and to trigger investments in the development of 'nascent' safety nets or social assistance structures
- Social protection programmes are designed and implemented in a predictably resourced and sustainable manner, appropriate to the contexts of protracted conflict and forced displacement, that is to say:
 - They provide coverage for all people including vulnerable and displaced people outside times of emergency and facilitate their contribution into national systems by linking them to employment and livelihoods efforts;
 - They support the immediate needs of people during emergencies in a timely manner;
 - They contribute to building resilience of people, communities and systems to shocks that affect an individual or a household and widespread disasters: enabling people and the national social protection system to anticipate and prepare for a crisis or disaster;
 - They monitor the actual benefits for the beneficiaries and document good practices and lessons learned;
 - They are implemented through local governance structures that comprise skilled and well informed workforce.

It is urgent that all stakeholders join the existing efforts to scale up inclusive and risk-informed social protection coverage in contexts of fragility and forced displacement.

2.1 Supporting an inclusive approach – Leaving no one behind

Social protection can provide an equal opportunity for socially marginalised groups such as women, children, older people, the displaced, stateless, forcibly returned refugees, people in remote areas, persons living with disabilities and people living with, at risk and affected by HIV to engage in and benefit from development processes.

It is imperative that national governments supported by partners, take the lead in **coordinating, designing, reforming and scaling up** social protection systems that:

- Provide predictable social transfers and access to social services to all including the poor and vulnerable while also building the resilience of all risk prone groups towards future shocks and crises, particularly in countries or locations characterised by (i) chronic fragility, (ii) at risk of, or impacted by conflict, and, (iii) at risk of, or impacted by forced displacement and protection abuses;
- Are specifically designed to reduce vulnerabilities of the populations affected by shocks and protracted crises (natural and human made) and contribute to their empowerment.

It is fundamental that all national governments hosting **forcibly displaced people** and/or international actors supporting these people:

- Ensure that the needs of both host communities and forcibly displaced communities are assessed and are covered equitably by the national social protection system;
- Provide benefits that can be accessed within and outside the country by those forcibly displaced;
- Extend support to forcibly displaced populations to access basic services in their new location through the use of institutional frameworks including empowered social workforce, technology and involvement of the private sector under the authority of public social protection institutions;
- Address the stigma and discrimination that constrain people forcibly displaced from engaging and benefiting from host-countries and communities social services;
- Recognise the contribution of the forcibly displaced populations to the local economy and provide a legal basis for them to access the labour market in host communities and engage productively in economic activities (e.g. work permits) as well as the possibility to contribute to social security;
- Appropriately scale up services and social protection support to communities hosting forcibly displaced people to provide equal development opportunities.

The role played by local and international humanitarian actors in protecting the basic rights of people living in contexts of fragility and forced displacement is commendable. It is equally essential to support **humanitarian actors' role** in creating, maintaining and strengthening inclusive social protection systems through:

- Filling resource and capacity gaps in the national social protection system to support existing as well as new groups that are in need of support owing to the context of fragility and forced displacement, with a view towards transferring and building the capacities of the local authorities;
- Providing assistance to people who are marginalised for political reasons and are excluded from the national social protection system.
- Ensuring humanitarian efforts are well coordinated and contribute to resilience-building.

2.2 Strengthening joint humanitarian and development action for collective outcomes

The increasing protracted nature of conflict and displacement requires joint action between humanitarian and development actors assuring constant coverage of needs across both sets of actors, particularly as the context evolves. This means the scaling up of predictable and sustainable measures offered by social protection, beyond the current focus on short-term recurrent humanitarian assistance.

International and local actors engaged in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation need to **concretely coordinate** within and among themselves the support that they provide to national and local authorities in the planning, design and implementation of humanitarian response in accordance with local rules and regulations wherever feasible.

It is urgent that international and local actors engaged in development and/or humanitarian agenda join the efforts of national and sub national governments to **develop and scale up risk-informed and shock-responsive social protection systems**, through:

- Engaging early on with national and/or local governments to strengthen the design of social protection systems by introducing features ahead of disaster and crises, which allow the social protection system to –
 - Anticipate natural disasters and the escalation of conflict and displacement;
 - Include chronically poor and groups vulnerable to the identified risks;
 - Increase the level and breadth of support without compromising speed and efficiency of the temporary scale up when needed; and

- Maintain support for medium and long-term needs of people affected by protracted conflict;
- Where appropriate and possible, utilise the existing social protection system for provision of humanitarian assistance and contribute to resilience building;
- Work closely with local authorities to support and if necessary adapt governance structures to strengthen coordination and build synergies between departments responsible for social protection, humanitarian assistance, forced displacement, agriculture & allied sectors, labour, disaster risk management, security, health, education and finance;
- Empower local-level governance structures through resource allocation and capacity enhancement of the social workforce while working to ensure equality of treatment;
- Work closely with communities, local authorities and partners to monitor the provision and quality of social protection and its actual benefits for the beneficiaries.

It will also contribute to the commitments at the WHS to localise humanitarian response.

Humanitarian actors acting **in accordance with humanitarian principles** may have a particularly important role in some contexts to support the people and communities living in contexts of fragility and forced displacement. In such contexts, it is essential that international and local actors:

- Align as much as possible humanitarian response, in particular cash transfers with the design of social protection that exists in the area or elsewhere in the country. This can facilitate scaling up of social protection to people left behind in crisis affected context and reduce the risks of exclusion;
- Where social protection systems are ineffective or do not exist, strengthen or design complementary humanitarian cash transfers with due consideration to sustainability, scalability and skills requirement for management over a longer term as well as the participation of persons concerned in the governance of the schemes;
- All should combine efforts to assess needs and develop a business case to enable governments to plan for and scale up commitments to social protection during an emergency, using this as a springboard for increased coverage after the emergency.

There are important **evidence gaps in the area of social protection in contexts of fragility and forced displacement**. It is important that all stakeholders (governments, international and local actors, academic institutions and donors) **leverage and invest resources in monitoring & evaluation** as well as in **high quality research** to generate a systematic evidence base **to improve quality in policies, promote better programming design and practices and make the investment case** to enable governments to expand social protection coverage and contribute to learning.

It is paramount that **international policy makers** engaged in the implementation of the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants, and the Recommendation 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience and those drafting the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework for the Global Refugee and Migrant Compacts acknowledge the critical role of social protection and **recommend concrete actions for stakeholders to use social protection systems for addressing humanitarian needs**, contributing to a dignified solution for displacement, whilst helping to build resilience building and peace building in contexts of protracted conflict and forced displacement.

2.3 Ensuring adequate financing

Financial resources and necessary budgetary provisions can be made to scale up social protection systems that are risk informed, shock responsive, adequately as well as appropriately resourced and well governed.

Bilateral and multi-lateral donors need to support developing country governments by **ensuring a coherent funding architecture** that:

- Ensures coordination between humanitarian, development, domestic and other funding sources;
- Facilitates more joined up work along the humanitarian and development nexus and across sectors such as education, health, labour, food security, nutrition, agriculture, employment, among other;
- Is flexible and provides predictable multi-year financing to enable social protection system preparedness and support to people living in fragile contexts.

Dialogue and monitoring of progress among donors on the commitments is key to increase the volume and timeliness of humanitarian funding for timely scale up of social protection support in times of crises.

2.8 ANNEX 2: COMMITMENTS MADE AT GLOBAL FORUMS/PLATFORM:

A. The [Sustainable Development Goals](#), 2015, to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all.

- **Goal 1: End Poverty in all its forms everywhere.**

Target 1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

- **Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

Target 5c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

B. The agreement reached on the core responsibilities and related commitments made by humanitarian actors, private sector and the donors at the [World Humanitarian Summit](#), 2016. Those relevant for this conference being:

- **Core Responsibility 3: Leave no one behind- A commitment to address forced displacement:** These include commitments related to displacement and gender equality as well as connecting business, education, disability, and young people.
- **Core Responsibility 4: Changing people's lives. From delivering aid to ending need.** Commitments made to 'reinforce, do not replace, national and local systems' emphasized the importance of extending and improving social protection systems.
- **Core Responsibility 5: Invest in Humanity.** Commitments for scaling-up and more systematically considering the use of cash transfers in conjunction with national social protection schemes.

C. The [New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants](#), 2016 call to **improve the delivery of humanitarian and development assistance** to those countries most affected and **where appropriate develop national strategies for the protection of refugees within the framework of national social protection systems**, as appropriate.

D. [ILO recommendation concerning employment and decent work for peace and resilience](#), 2017 (No. 205) recognizes the need to **promote decent work, social protection and employment opportunities for refugees and host communities**.

E. [ILO recommendation concerning national floors of social protection](#), 2012 (No.202) reaffirms the **right to social protection for all**.

F. The 2016 [Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS](#) calls on members states to strengthen national social and child protection systems to ensure that **by 2020 75% of people living with HIV, at risk of HIV or affected by HIV benefit from HIV-sensitive social protection**.

G. The [joint statement of the members of the SPIAC B](#) to the World Humanitarian Summit calling governments, development and humanitarian actors to:

- **In extreme fragility and protracted crises:** Invest in the development of 'nascent' safety nets or social assistance delivery mechanisms, while further strengthening and developing technical and analytical capacity at national and sub-national levels; and
- **In contexts of forced displacement:** Strengthen the effective reach and design of social protection systems to mitigate forced displacement due to shocks and crises and ensure that host communities, IDPs and refugees are equitably assisted in the event of crises. `

Useful links

Conference documents:

- [Concept note](#)
- [Conference website](#)
- [Conference programme](#)
- [Speaker bibliographies](#)
- [Livestream recordings](#)
- [Event video](#)
- [Country profiles](#)
- [Outcome document](#)

Articles and interviews filmed during the Conference:

- [Expanding Turkey's Social Protection Systems to Refugees](#)
- [From the ground up: The long road to social protection in Somalia](#)
- [Beyond cash transfers: Social protection in fragile contexts](#)
- [Partnership for Prospects: Helping Syrian refugees find employment in the Middle East](#)
- [Yemen: Community-based support in times of war](#)
- [Social protection and humanitarian actors: Q&A with Monique Pariat, Director-General of ECHO](#)

Useful online platforms to continue the conversation:

- [Socialprotection.org](#)
- [CaLP – The Cash Learning Partnership](#)