



International Conference on

Social Protection in contexts of Fragility & Forced Displacement

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Outcome Document



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1. 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:

2. 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.



ANNEX 1: 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.

