



## SOCIAL PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS

### Facts & Figures:

**65.6 million** people forcibly displaced;

**20 million at risk of famine** in North-East Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen;

**1.5 billion people** living in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

### EU Action:

**International Conference on Social Protection** on 28-29 September 2017, with the participation of 25 countries;

Development of a **training package** and provision of **guidance on social protection** in fragile contexts;

**Regional workshops** with the EU Member States on social protection in humanitarian contexts.

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### Key messages

- With more than **65 million people forcibly displaced**, and **130 million relying on humanitarian aid**, there is an urgent need for **improved coherence** between humanitarian and development actions, and closer cooperation to create long-term and sustainable responses which include livelihood opportunities for crisis-affected people.
- The robust, yet widely flexible delivery mechanisms of **social protection** make this policy instrument particularly attractive. Scaling up **social protection systems** has been identified as one of the core avenues to enhance the **resilience** of vulnerable populations.
- Both the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and the recently-adopted **European Consensus on Development** (2017) reconfirm the relevance of social protection as a means of addressing poverty and inequality. The 2016 **World Humanitarian Summit** also yielded a commitment to "support the further **expansion and strengthening** of social protection systems (...) as a means of responding to shocks and protracted crises".
- The European Commission's development and humanitarian departments are working closely together to identify **best practices and opportunities** to inform how the EU can support the implementation of social protection programmes. 'Leaving no one behind' is an important objective for the EU, and to achieve this it seeks innovative solutions to the challenges faced by crisis-affected people.



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## Background

Social protection may be broadly defined as a **set of policies and actions that enhance the capacity of all people, but notably poor and vulnerable groups, to escape from poverty** (or avoid falling into poverty), and better manage risks and shocks. In crisis or shock situations, social protection interventions are primarily a means to help meeting immediate needs and reducing mortality and human suffering. Specific attention needs to be paid to the affected **most vulnerable households and individuals**, such as persons with disabilities, indigenous people, single households, children, youth, the elderly as well as displaced people, including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

While building national social protection systems has traditionally fallen under the remit of development, the humanitarian community can play an important role in aligning with and complementing these efforts, where consistent with its principles. The increasing use of **cash-based assistance in humanitarian responses** fits well with the use of safety nets and a wider social protection approach, especially in **urban settings**.

There are three types of situations where linking social protection and humanitarian action can bridge the so-called "humanitarian-development divide":

- **Extreme fragility and protracted crises:** Humanitarian actions can be used as a window of opportunity to trigger investment in the development of nascent safety nets. The longer-term aim in such a scenario is to progressively **move chronic humanitarian caseloads into social protection systems**.
- **Managing disasters differently:** As a component of government-driven frameworks for response to disasters and crises, social protection can contribute to **capacity-building** at individual, household, community and national levels - so that these actors can withstand the negative impact of shocks -, while promoting a more sustainable management of resources.
- **Forced displacement:** Social protection can become a cornerstone of any strategy to address - also often protracted - forced displacement, including that of IDPs and refugees.

In recent years there have been many examples of complementarity between social protection interventions and the Commission's humanitarian response in countries like **Ethiopia**, with the creation of a scalable rural safety net for food-insecure people; the **Philippines** in response to the **Typhoon Haiyan**; or **Turkey** with the **Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN)**, a single-card social assistance scheme designed empower up to 1.3 million refugees to cover their basic needs. Social protection systems have also played an important role in the response to the **2016 El Niño** crisis.

## The International Conference on Social Protection

**On 28 and 29 September 2017**, the first **International Conference on Social Protection** will take place in Brussels, **organised by UNICEF and co-funded by the European Commission**. The conference will bring together practitioners from humanitarian and development institutions, including representatives from host governments, academia and civil society organisations. It will examine ways in which social protection systems can contribute to effective crisis response in fragile and forced displacement contexts. To help operationalise the humanitarian-development continuum, it will also highlight opportunities for humanitarian assistance either to build on existing social protection systems or to help create them, without compromising humanitarian principles.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), and the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) are closely involved in the conference preparation.



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