

CSO comments on HLPE recommendations on Social Protection

4th July

General observations :

We welcome the general outline of the paper. We welcome the human rights based approach recognizing both the Right to food (RtF) and the Right to Social Protection (RSP).

We therefore insist in referring more to the achieved international engagements on the Right to Social Protection, and in particular the recommendations on the Social Protection Floor, agreed by the International Labour Conference of last June.

We think that the key component to fulfill both the RtF and the RSP is to ensure stable and decent income security to all people – working and non-working- , over the whole life cycle to enable them to access food at all times. This element should be more prominent in the background paper and integrated in some specific recommendations. This should be added to the other food entitlement failures as described in the paper (ie. Production, employment, trade and transfers), that specific SP instruments try to address.

The HLPE has shown that SP can be an effective tool to ensure food and nutritional security, but it is also recognized it is not sufficient. Therefore we stress the importance of framing SP policies, programmes and instruments as part of a more comprehensive policy to eradicate poverty, ensure the right to food to all, and develop resilient food systems. SP policies and programmes should be part of more comprehensive national and regional food, nutritional, income security and agricultural policies and be consistent with policies *that* strengthen small-scale, sustainable food production ; increase the resilience of local food systems ; reinforce local and national food markets ; support small-scale food producers themselves with especially attention to women food producers who face specific difficulties and need specific policies and specific support.

SP should be designed to protect people from staying or falling in poverty and food insecurity traps, to proactively promote the RtF and the RSP by contributing to address the causes of food insecurity and increase peoples and country's resilience to shocks.

While Social Protection can play an important role in supporting food security, it is essential that social protection programmes are designed to maximize impact on undernutrition. We feel the recommendations should further highlight the importance of social protection in addressing under-nutrition. Social protection can reduce under-nutrition by reducing inequalities and address economic poverty at household level – increasing access to food and dietary diversity, improving quality of care for women and children and increasing access to healthcare. Gender equity could also be strengthened in different recommendations.

Finally, we insist on the importance that vulnerable people shouldn't be merely seen as beneficiaries of SP programmes, but as right holders should be able to participate in the design and assessment of SP policies and schemes, access to remedies for those denied benefits on the basis of non-discrimination and call their governments to account for their policies.

Specific proposals on different recommendations:

Recommendation 1. Every country to design and put in place a comprehensive and nationally owned social protection system that contributes to ensuring the realisation of the right to adequate food and the right to social protection for all.

Each country should develop a comprehensive social protection portfolio and action plan as part of a national food security and poverty eradication policies, that would realise the right to food and the right to social protection in each country. Taking into account the Social Protection Floor principles, this process should be country-led with rigorous stakeholder consultation, including the active participation of local communities. The design should start with a national food security assessment and should include: a mix of appropriate tools, goals and intended beneficiaries, targeting and registration methodologies, institutional arrangements, delivery mechanisms, accountability systems, sound monitoring and evaluation that includes impact indicators for income and nutrition, funding requirements and funding sources. Social Protection Floor should be promoted to achieve income security for food security “The guarantees should ensure at a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and to basic income security which together secure effective access to **goods and services defined as necessary at the national level.**”¹. It has to be a coordinated process which includes what has already been achieved in other UN agencies, such as ILO, rather than to establish a separate social protection process.

2. Social protection systems should pursue a ‘twin-track’ strategy to maximise their positive impacts on food security, by providing essential assistance in the short-term and supporting livelihoods in the long-term.

¹ (art, 4, SPF Recommendation). It has to be a coordinated process which includes what has already been achieved in other UN agencies, such as ILO rather than establish a separate social protection process.

Adequate linkages are required between the two tracks of immediate and long term interventions making the transition from humanitarian assistance to predictable, longer-term development approaches, reaching the Social Protection Floor. These can improve the child nutrition and improve cognitive development, school attainments and future labour income, productivity and safety, thereby improving income potential and promoting development. Social protection is most effective when it delivers social assistance or social insurance to food insecure people, while simultaneously protecting or building productive assets that contribute to economic growth and reduce the risk of future food insecurity. Examples are public works programmes and conditional cash transfers, which transfer food or cash while investing in physical infrastructure and human capital formation respectively. This requires strong linkages from social protection to complementary sectors such as education, health and agriculture. Social protection should also enhance poor people's access to key institutions, including markets and financial services. Any sustainable growth strategy needs a social protection component.

Recommendation 3. Social protection needs to be better designed and implemented to address vulnerability to poverty and chronic as well as acute hunger, for instance by being accessible on demand to everyone who needs assistance at any time of the year and stage of lifecycle. When required, the following mechanisms/systems will help in rapid scale up of support - (i) contingency financing and (ii) coordination between different departments/donors responsible for responding to chronic and acute hunger.

Most social protection programmes are not well designed to manage vulnerability. Chronically vulnerable individuals might need permanent assistance, recognising that not everyone can graduate out of food insecurity and reliance on transfers. Social protection must be predictable and reliable, to counteract the unpredictability and vulnerability of livelihoods that is a fundamental source of food insecurity, and it should be appropriate and sensitive to vulnerabilities at particular stages of life. Social protection systems should be designed in such a way that they can respond quickly to shocks such as droughts, floods, food price spikes and protracted crisis. The design of social protection systems must :

- Should identify the importance of addressing vulnerability to under-nutrition by referring to evidence which suggests larger programme impact on nutrition for girls occur where transfers are unconditional or conditional on health and education as supposed to saving requirements and work.
- Build in mechanisms to evaluate the cost of a nutritious diet, and use this to determine the size of cash transfers in contexts where market systems are functioning well and cash transfer is the most appropriate response.
- Be flexible to allow for mid course corrections in the value of transfer and in the modality of transfer to meet the needs of people affected by covariate risks.
- Include a mapping of vulnerabilities to covariate risks in the country as a part of contingency planning and creation as well as regular updating of a database to support targeting (if needed) in times of crisis.
- Protect productive assets during time of crisis and address the 'resilience deficit' which results from recurrent crises.
- Ensure minimum wage policies and employment schemes include rural workers as well as their right to negotiate a living wage which could secure enough food for the entire family.

Positive examples include demand-driven employment guarantee schemes in South Asia, and safety net programmes in East Africa that added new beneficiaries during the 2011 food crisis.

Recommendation 4 should refer to the food entitlement failures :

- Governments should develop SP policies, programmes and instruments aiming to respond to the most important food entitlements failures, production, employment and income, trade, and transfers. Therefore the CFS urges governments to prioritize programmes that ensure small scale producers to maintain their access and control over their productive resources, to develop policies and programmes prioritizing employment, stable incomes and decent living wages, prioritize resilience through the reinforcement of local, national and regional food

markets, and ensure transfers that promote social justice including through progressive tax reforms

Recommendation 5 . Where a large proportion of the food insecure people earn their living from agriculture, specific social protection programmes for food security should support rural livelihoods directly by strengthening small-scale, sustainable food production, increase the resilience of local food systems and reinforce local and national food markets.

These include input subsidies, public works projects that create agricultural assets such as irrigation, and home-grown school feeding that purchases food from local small scale food producers, as well as integrated programmes that link cash or food transfers to agricultural livelihood packages and extension services. The ‘twin-track’ principle also applies here: poor small scale food producers need support to increase or stabilise crop yields and incomes, while the poorest need immediate protection against hunger. Support to consumers (e.g. food price subsidies) should not undermine incentives for small scale food producers. The existing national social protection systems should be extended to rural areas : access to essential health care, including maternity care ; basic income security in case of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability as well as income security for older persons. Special attention should be paid to the roles of women as food producers and care-takers with responsibility for food provision within their families.

ADDITIONAL POINTS :

SP policies, programmes and instruments should pay attention to the role and contribution women and girls with respect to the cultural discrimination and structural violence that impedes their access to food security, and adequate nutrition, and their special vulnerabilities in regard to malnutrition, maternity protection before and after birth and the many forms of legal and cultural discrimination they suffer; this includes the particular nutritional vulnerabilities of women and children that are often not adequately addressed;

Specific attention should be given to address food insecurity of people living in politically fragile contexts of protracted crises and conflict situations. These are also the contexts where state structures and systems are extremely weak and fractured. In such contexts, people need social protection to not only meet their survival needs but also to adapt their livelihoods. A good analysis of fragility along with the need to coordinate with agencies with an explicit humanitarian mandate is required.

Recommendation 6 The CFS should request ILO and WFP to monitor and report on the incorporation of the provisions on the right to adequate food and the right to social protection contained in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and in the corresponding international human rights conventions, into national legislation and programmes supported by an enforceable legal framework in all countries. Both agencies will provide the CFS with a yearly update on the progress and lessons learned

Recommendation 7. Request ILO and WFP to coordinate the development of a comprehensive Guidance Note for Social Protection in consultation with all relevant stakeholders for further consideration by the CFS, that establish benchmarks for the progressive realisation of the RtF and the RSP at national and international levels; provide guiding principles for SP policies and programmes, based on the ILO Social Protection Floor principles, on the relevant elements of the Global Strategic Framework of the CFS and in coherence with the nutrition policies and services; define monitoring systems and evaluation methods that include improvement of livelihoods resilience and nutritional status of beneficiaries; define the role of non-state actors in social protection provisioning – international organisations, NGOs, civil society, farmers’ organisations, the private sector, as well as

informal or 'traditional' social protection mechanisms – and proposing coordination modalities for mobilising these actors to work together effectively. .

Recommendation 8 A specific reference to food assistance could be added:

- **Food assistance:** countries that provide international assistance should regularly examine their policies and base those policies on sound needs assessments that involves both recipients and donors and targets especially needy and vulnerable groups. Food assistance should be provided only when it is the most effective and appropriate means of addressing the food or nutrition needs of the most vulnerable populations. In emergency and post emergency situations, food assistance is vital to protect livelihoods and build people's resilience by providing for immediate and short term food consumption and livelihood protection inputs. Food assistance should avoid creating dependency and disruption to local markets. Food should be purchased wherever possible and appropriate on a local or regional basis or provided in the form of cash or voucher transfers.

Recommendation 9 The CFS should advocate for monitoring and evaluation of the impact of social protection programmes to include impact indicators for improvement in the income and nutritional status of beneficiaries. As a minimum, dietary diversity should be included as one such indicator, to provide a comparable measure of impact that can help to identify the most effective tools for addressing structural hunger and poverty. All monitoring systems and evaluations should include a gender audit, to capture potential heightened risks facing women and the girl child. More broadly, the CFS should support international efforts to improve the quality of evaluations, specifically for programmes related to food security and nutrition.

The monitoring section should recognize the following principles :

The five principles that should apply to monitoring and accountability systems are that:

- They should be human rights based, with particular reference to the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.
- They should make it possible for decision makers to be accountable;
- They should be participatory and include an assessment that involves all stakeholders, including the most vulnerable;
- They should be simple, accurate, timely and understandable to all, with indicators are disaggregated by sex, age, region, race/ethnicity, wealth quintile etc., and that that capture impact, process and expected outcomes;
- They should not duplicate existing systems, but rather build upon and strengthen them.