

Concept Paper

Emerging Issues: Social Protection

Public policies must express the real commitment of the State for the welfare and progress of all.

The global financial and economic crisis that began in 2008 has generated debates about the new rules of operation of the current economic system and the role of public policies on social and economic dynamics.

Social protection is now a challenge; it is not merely a set of economic policies in the workplace and in the areas of production. Rather, it is also a set of measures in the social sphere, which allows substantial contributions to the generation of frameworks of equality, by reducing the gaps in inequality and the eradication of poverty and social exclusion.

It is necessary to analyze the impact of fiscal contraction trends and public expenditure adjustment which have been identified in a number of countries on those most vulnerable in society. In this context, it is necessary to consider the most appropriate social policies to protect these groups while taking into account the UN Social Protection Floor initiative which calls for universal access to essential social transfers and services.

There is a growing consciousness of the benefits of social protection as a measure to protect people from becoming trapped in poverty, to empower them to seize opportunities, to help workers to adjust to changes and to deal with unemployment and thus support productivity. Therefore, the importance of social policies and social protection systems that address and reduce inequality and social exclusion for long-term sustainable and inclusive growth and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals should be taken into consideration.

The consideration of the emerging issue of Social Protection, would attempt to answer the following questions:

- Do alternative policies that respond to social needs and allow a recovery for all exist or not?
- Are the policies of fiscal contraction in line with international commitments on social protection?
- In terms of magnitude and speed of implementation, would these policies allow for the achievement of national development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals?
- Which labour initiatives and social policies will work best to reduce income inequalities across the world?
- How can labour initiatives and social policies tackle inequality and thus help foster stronger and fairer economic growth?
- How should priorities for social policy be set in a context of fiscal policies and a risk of growing poverty?