



Social Protection for Food Security

**Key findings from a report by
the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE)**

FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific



FAO's mandate and Social Protection

- ▶ FAO's mandate is to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world.
- ▶ Livelihood security has a direct impact on the availability, access, utilization and stability of food supply
- ▶ The long term impacts of disruptions in livelihood security can be seriously detrimental to MDGs achievement.



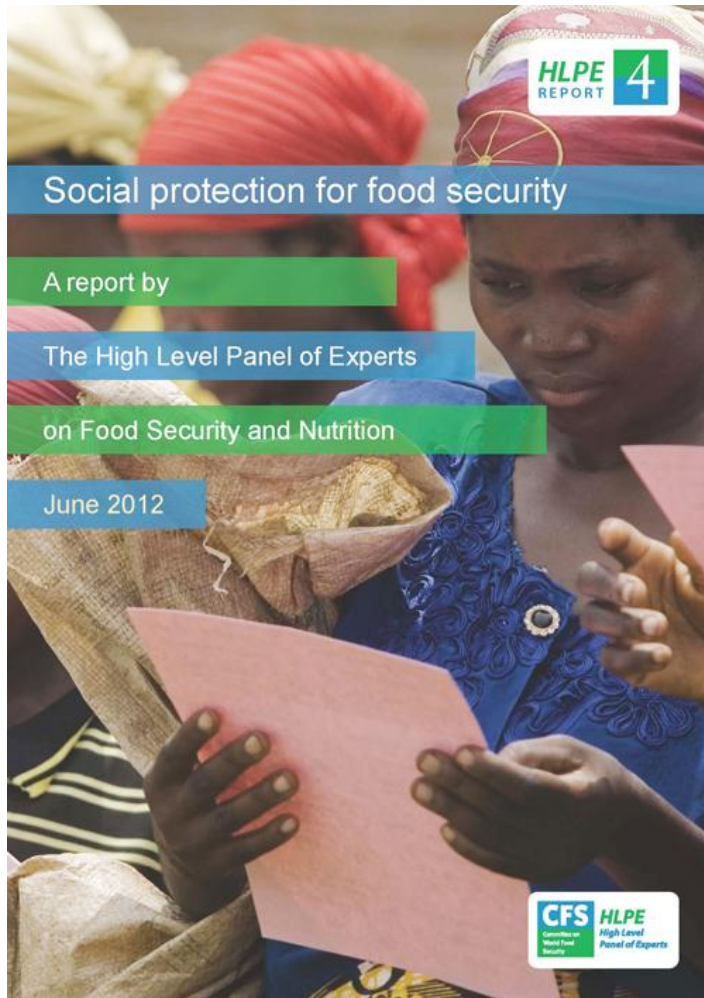
In 2010, the CFS requested the HLPE to work on Social Protection, specifically to review:

- Ways to lessen vulnerability through social and productive safety net programs and policies with respect to food and nutritional security, taking into consideration differing conditions across countries and regions.
- The impact of existing policies for the improvement of living conditions and resilience of vulnerable populations, especially small scale rural producers, urban and rural poor as well as women and children.



HLPE Report #4

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What is “Social Protection for Food Security”?

- ▶ **Social protection** is a range of policy instruments that address poverty and vulnerability, through:
social assistance (e.g. cash transfers or food aid),
social insurance (e.g. unemployment benefits, pensions),
social inclusion (e.g. legislation on the human right to food).
- ▶ **Food insecurity** is the inability to secure an adequate diet today and the risk of being unable to do so in the future.
- ▶ **“Social protection for food security”** means – in this report – using social protection instruments, programmes and systems to promote the human right to adequate food for all.



Social protection for food security

Entitlement category	Social protection instruments	Food security objectives
Production	2.1. Input subsidies 2.2. Crop and livestock insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote food production Protect against harvest failure or livestock mortality
Labour	2.3. Public works programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide temporary employment Create useful infrastructure Promote agricultural production
Trade	2.4. Food price stabilisation 2.5. Food subsidies 2.6. Grain reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain market access to food Keep food affordable for the poor Ensure adequate market food supplies
Transfers	2.7. School feeding 2.8. Supplementary feeding 2.9. Conditional cash transfers 2.10. Unconditional cash transfers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce hunger Promote access to education Promote local food production Enhance food consumption Reduce hunger or poverty Promote children's access to education and healthcare Reduce hunger or poverty

Key findings

– Social Protection Instruments

▶ **Agricultural input subsidies**

- + Generally positive impacts on agriculture production
- + can benefit women farmers (low access to commercial inputs)
- Generalized input subsidies are expensive and inefficient
- politically difficult to modify or abolished

▶ **Public works programme**

- + can create useful infrastructure (e.g. rural roads and irrigation)
- can exclude women and the labour-constrained poor.



Key findings

– Social Protection Instruments

▶ Grain reserves

- + National level reserves can ensure that supplies of emergency food aid are readily available
- Expensive to maintain, and undermine private traders by distorting market and prices.

▶ Conditional cash transfers (CCTs)

- +CCTs can improve food security
- +Higher levels of school attendance and immunisation
- increase administrative costs and complexity
- from a human rights perspective, it is defensible to attach conditions to the receipt of social transfers?



Key findings—from instruments to systems

- ◆ Almost all social protection instruments are controversial.
- ◆ Selecting instruments should follow a food security analysis and a needs assessment.
- ◆ No single instrument is enough – a suite of interventions is needed to address all food insecurity needs.
- ◆ Many criticisms of social protection programmes reflect bad design or implementation – so they can be improved.
- ◆ Accountability mechanisms are crucial for ensuring effective implementation – a “social contract” between governments and residents – e.g. complaints procedure social audits.



Key findings–issues

- ◆ Targeting needs to be well designed and implemented, to avoid the risk of transferring resources to ineligible or non-needy people, or of failing to transfer resources to eligible people.
- ◆ Dependency = Evidence suggests that well-designed social protection programmes does not necessary create dependency.
- ◆ Premature graduation could leave people worse off than before.



Recommendations

1. Every country should put in place a social protection system that contributes to the right to adequate food for all.
2. Social protection systems should follow a 'twin-track' strategy – provide short-term assistance + support long-term livelihoods.
3. Social protection must address vulnerability to poverty and hunger – e.g. by scaling up rapidly when required.
4. Social protection for food security should be underpinned by the human rights to food and social protection, for example, with a “framework law”, and with accountability mechanisms.
5. Social protection for food security should support agricultural livelihoods directly, because a large proportion of the world's food insecure people earn their living from agriculture.



Thank you

