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SOCIAL PROTECTION AND AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

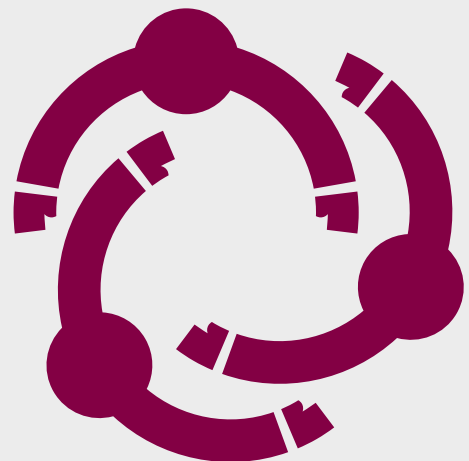
THEMATIC STUDY 5

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Foreword

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the *Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security* (hereinafter “Right to Food Guidelines”), the FAO Right to Food Team has prepared seven thematic studies that document and highlight progress made over the last ten years, while also capturing the challenges ahead in relation to major issues covered by the Right to Food Guidelines (RtFG). The studies are helpful in reflecting upon current gaps and areas of improvement for future implementation of the guidelines and valuable for every person or organization that works in the context of national food security and is interested in realizing the right to adequate food by implementing the RtFG.

The thematic studies¹ cover the following topics:

1. **THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD IN FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION POLICY DESIGNS**
Guidelines 2, 3, 5, 6 and 13
2. **INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD**
Guidelines 5, 18
3. **LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PROGRESSIVE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD**
Guidelines 7
4. **NATURAL RESOURCES GOVERNANCE AND THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD**
Guideline 8
5. **SOCIAL PROTECTION AND AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD**
Guidelines 8, 14
6. **NUTRITION, EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING FOR THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD**
Guidelines 10, 11
7. **INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD**
Guideline 19, Part III

1 The views expressed in these thematic studies are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of FAO. The conclusions given are considered appropriate at the time of preparation. They may be modified in the light of further knowledge gained.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to acknowledge Sisay Yesanew for his suggestions on the structure of the study and for sharing his knowledge on civil society in Africa. The study benefited from the insight of Juan Carlos García y Cebolla, leader of the FAO Right to Food team, and the collaboration and assistance of the FAO Production for Protection team, particularly Marco Knowles, Ben Davis, and Massimiliano Terzini. Peer review of the study was enhanced with comments from Elisenda Estruch, Militezegga Abduk Mustafa, Vito Cistulli, and Ana Paula Dela O Campos of the Social Protection Division of FAO. Information on regional developments in Latin America was enriched by FAO's Regional Office in Latin America, namely, by Ricardo Rapallo and Pablo Faret Moreno. The author is grateful for contributions from the following organizations: the Africa Platform for Social Protection, Help Age International, the Department of Economic and Social Development of the Organization of American States, the United Nations Children's Fund and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Special thanks go to Dr. Tavengwa M. Nhongo, Executive Director of the Africa Platform for Social Protection, as well as Edmond Odaba and Marion Ouma from APSP's Kenya Office; Tessa Vorbohle, Food Security and Livelihood Policy Advisor at Help Age International; Alexandra N. Barrantes, Social Protection Specialist and Coordinator of the Inter-American Social Protection Network of OAS; José Luis Corral, Cash Transfer Specialist of UNICEF; Christina Behrendt, Senior Social Protection Policy Specialist at ILO and Victoire Umuhire, Legal Officer also at ILO. The author wishes to thank Andrew Park, who edited the Thematic Study.

List of acronyms

AEPF	Asia-Europe People's Forum
APSP	African Platform for Social Protection
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BDT	Basis Data Terpadu of Indonesia
CARICOM	<i>Comunidad y Mercado Común del Caribe</i> (Caribbean Community and Common Market)
CT-OVC	Cash transfer - Orphans and Vulnerable Children Programme of Kenya
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DFID	Department for International Development
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FISP	Farm Input Subsidy Programme of Malawi
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IASPN	Inter-American Social Protection Network
IDA	International Development Association
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPCRM	Integrated Public Complaints Referral Mechanism of Kenya
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIS	Management Information Systems
NGO	Non-governmental Organization

OAS	Organization of American States
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PARLATINO	Parlamento Latino Americano
PDMA	Poverty Disaster Management Authority of Pakistan
PDS	Public Distribution System of India
PKH	Program Keluarga Harapan of the Philippines
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme of Ethiopia
RAP	ILO Rapid Assessment Protocol
RFM	Risk Financing Mechanism
RtFG	Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security (Right to Food Guidelines)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SASPEN	Southern African Social Protection Experts Network
SCTP	Social Cash Transfer Programme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPF-I	Social Protection Floor Initiative
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFP	World Food Programme

1. INTRODUCTION

Promoting social protection has been recognized as crucial in efforts to achieve inclusive growth and development. Social protection is considered critical not only for reducing or preventing income poverty but also for achieving human development outcomes (nutrition, health, education), and for tackling social inequality. It can have an impact on the right to adequate food because it addresses constraints that prevent people from accessing food or procuring it by a variety of means. Such constraints typically include lack of income or income-generating capacity as well as lack of education, health, productive resources, or opportunities for employment. There are also socially rooted norms and realities such as discrimination and social exclusion that add to the intensity of deprivation of the poor and hungry which requires attention in this context. The *Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security* (hereinafter RtFG) foresaw the value of social protection as part of the solution to food insecurity in humanitarian as well as long term development contexts.

1.1 Scope of the retrospective review and conceptual framework

This Thematic Study takes a retrospective glance at social protection related developments over a span of a decade from 2004 to 2014. It starts off mentioning the historical shift in development policymaking in the early 2000s from a narrow focus on risks to a wider focus on rights. This shift created the context within which application of a human rights-based approach to social protection has found a greater audience in the past ten years.² The study takes a wide angle view to capture trends at global and regional level which support endorsement of a rights based approach to social protection, reveals the expanding international consensus on the link between social protection, food security and the right to adequate food, and takes stock of a noticeable increase in the presence of non-state actors in social policy development. It looks at key opportunities that have surfaced for technical cooperation, knowledge exchange, and financial assistance which make social protection a feasible development option for poverty reduction and economic growth both of which can enhance food security. Within this context the question is: are States with the necessary political will in place in a better position to social and financial covenants to invest in social protection in such a way as to maximize its potential to support progressive realization of the various human rights including the right to adequate food? The evolution of an enabling environment seems to point to yes. The drivers of the evolution in the past decade have been international cooperation, partnerships in policy making, innovation in financing, and inclusive multistakeholder approaches to development all of which have facilitated sharing lessons and resources and opening up avenues for investment in social programmes. The RtFG foresaw the necessity of these drivers.³

2 The human rights-based approach to development essentially consists of three attributes: the proposition that development policies and programmes should have as their main objective the fulfilment of human rights, that they be anchored in rights and duties of corresponding actors whose capacities to claim rights and perform obligations should be strengthened, and that principles as well as standards of human rights must guide all policies and programmes in all sectors and all phases of development.

3 See Section III, No. 2, 4, 5, 12, 13 on details of international cooperation and assistance and No. 14 on partnerships; also see Section II, Guideline 6 on multistakeholder approaches and Guideline 12 on using national financial resources for *inter alia* social programmes.

The enabling environment is in fact as much a function of international consensus, dialogue and collaboration as it is a platform from which to assess whether States have tackled their obligations of conduct and result with respect to duties to respect, protect and fulfil (facilitate and provide) the right to adequate food. However, the study does not purport to rank States based on their performance of such obligations; rather it directs the reader to the evidence of the drivers as they developed at global and regional level. Sections II, III, and IV present the development of an enabling environment (bearing in mind obligations of States under Articles 2 and 11 of the ICESCR)⁴ across three dimensions: 1) policymaking that has led to a common understanding between stakeholders of the relevance of social protection for food security in general at international level and rights based approaches to social protection at regional level and in initiatives supported by the UN; 2) the increased availability of networks for dissemination of technical know-how and availability of financial mechanisms in order for States to undertake the necessary steps to invest in social protection;⁵ 3) inclusive processes as evidenced in the development and participation of civil society and non-state actors in social protection, in the mobilization of parliamentarians, as well as in the use of a multi stakeholder approach to promoting national social protection schemes based on the Social Protection Floor Initiative (see Section IV).

Two challenges for States remain even in the general context of expansion of programmes and avenues for assistance and collaboration. They are the issue of affordability of social protection particularly in light of the drive towards universal access to income security and health with new international standard defined by the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 2012) and the imperative to streamline already existing programmes and policies into harmonized systems of social protection that themselves are consistent and coordinated with other sectoral policies and programmes. Section IV explores these two challenges with a caveat that ten years ago the RtFG had already hinted at both.

1.2 Praxis concerns

In addition to presenting the trends that tend to support the evolution of an enabling environment for social protection to contribute to the realization of the right to adequate food, the scope of this Study is driven by concerns of food security strategists as to 1) whether social protection has worked for food security and in what context, 2) what is its relevance or link to right to adequate food, 3) what did the RtFG recommend as far as social protection measures for food security 3) and finally, what can or should be done to improve outcomes – food security outcomes via social protection and empowerment outcomes sought via the right to adequate food.

4 The main obligation of states is to take deliberate, concrete and targeted steps to the maximum of their available resources in order to progressively achieve the realization of human rights by every person in their jurisdiction (see CESCR, 1990, General Comment 3, para. 2).

5 A state must dedicate the maximum amount of resources available (domestically or through international assistance and cooperation) to ensure the enjoyment of human rights. Although adoption of legislative measures is singled out by the ICESCR as a concrete step (Art. 2.1) in the realization of the right to food, it is up to each state to decide what kind of measures are appropriate. If there are no sufficient resources to protect, respect or fulfil the normative content of the right to food, a state is obliged to seek assistance in order to ensure at the very least a minimum essential level of the right to food. If a state is to show resource constraints make it impossible for it to provide for minimum level guarantees for access to food, it must demonstrate that every effort has been made to use all the resources at its disposal in an effort to satisfy this obligation and to protect disadvantaged and marginalized members of society as matter of priority. Hence, as assistance is available for social protection, it becomes harder to justify lack of efforts to use social protection as one method to protect or fulfil the right to food.

As far as the first question is concerned, there are two ways in which social protection is relevant for food security. In the short term it can help households reduce malnutrition by providing access to food or the means to buy food. In the long run, it can contribute to agricultural development and growth by enhancing agriculture-based livelihoods, promoting local rural economies at the micro level by increasing income-generating activities and opportunities for the rural sector, and in some cases possibly stimulate aggregate demand and impact food markets. In other words, social protection can reinforce the twin-track approach to reducing hunger (FAO, 2012a).

The second question is a topic that has been treated extensively by the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition.⁶ For the purpose of the study, social protection is defined as a set of actions that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the excluded and marginalized (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004). Social protection as a general concept does not exclude health coverage but for the purpose of a discussion on safety nets as proposed by the RtFG, this study makes reference to social transfers as well as safety ropes, mechanisms that enhance income-generating abilities and opportunities for the poor and vulnerable (HLPE, 2012). However, it is assumed that social protection systems as mentioned in Section IV also include access to health services although the issue is not examined here.

Social protection itself is a human right stemming from the right to social security and the right to an adequate standard of living.⁷ It is linked concretely to the right to adequate food to the extent that it is designed to increase the ability of households and individuals to access food by virtue of 1) short term objectives to increase food consumption or expenditures, 2) long term objectives to increase human capital and promote the right to health or the right to work, and 3) promotion of local economies in a way that guarantees food availability and supply locally. The pathways to increase access to food are transfers securing income (sufficient for the food needs of beneficiaries) or jobs securing wages, as well as transfers providing resources or jobs that promote livelihoods and income-generation with which households procure food. They can also entail direct food assistance schemes whereby food is physically distributed to beneficiaries with conditionalities, such as the obligation to contribute labour to public works projects, or without conditionalities as in the case of food assistance.⁸

Addressing the third question, the RtFG recommended implementation of food-based and social safety nets⁹ and encouraged linking safety nets to complementary interventions that promote food security in the long term. This was based on the idea of promoting progress along the continuum from aid, to rehabilitation, to development.¹⁰ Also, the RtFG specifically promoted prioritization of basic services,

6 See HLPE, 2012.

7 See Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Articles 9 and 11 and General Comment 19, respectively.

8 An illustrative list of indicators of the right to adequate food revealing in greater detail the technical link to social protection can be found not only in the food security outcomes (consumption and expenditure) of social protection programmes, but also in their capacity to raise a proportion of targeted populations above the poverty line. Some relevant indicators are the coverage of programmes that secure access to productive resources for target groups and work participation rates by sex and target groups which can be applied to public work schemes.

9 See Section II, Guideline 14.

10 See Section II, Guideline 14.4.

promoting commitment to financing social expenditures¹¹ and securing access to resources, assets and employment opportunities. All together these recommendations can be interpreted as referring to protective, preventive and promotive social protection.¹² Therefore, Section V discusses social protection in the context of food security looking at the use of social protection from these three angles: a) as a response to crises (price volatility or the context of protracted crises), b) as local procurement tied to food assistance schemes and c) as social transfers that serve promotive functions at household and local economy level. The relevance of these types of interventions to the right to adequate food is in their potential to enhance access to food as well as to sustain capacity to procure it.

The fourth question is a pressing and practical one. It requires a discussion on efficiency and effectiveness and yet both are dependent on financial and human resources, training and capacity building as well as institutional cultures committed to incorporating human rights principles in policymaking and programming. The RtFG stated that in raising the standard of living of those below the poverty line, States should promote equality in practice which requires special measures to focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups.¹³ This translates to taking into account the special needs of vulnerable groups such as girls and women, the resource access constraints they face as well as their decision-making roles in household food distribution.¹⁴ The RtFG also pointed out that the targeting of beneficiaries must use transparent and non-discriminatory eligibility criteria and minimize exclusion errors, leakage and fraudulent or discriminatory practices.¹⁵ The RtFG recommended mechanisms through which beneficiaries wrongfully denied entitlements can access adequate, effective and prompt remedies.¹⁶ As these issues are explored in Section VI, illustrative examples of operationalization of some of the PANTHER (Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Transparency, Human dignity, Empowerment, and Rule of law) principles are provided; gender sensitive issues that invoke the principle of non-discrimination, technological innovation that increases accountability as well as grievance mechanisms that empower beneficiaries are emphasized as promising trends.

11 See Section II, Guidelines 3.6, 12.3, 12.4 and 14. Per FAO's State of Food Insecurity report of 2008, "safety net" is an umbrella term for various types of programmes aimed at assisting vulnerable population groups (such as food distribution programmes, cash transfers, school feeding programmes and employment schemes). Given the narrower context of discussion on social protection in 2004, it is more appropriate to consider the general term of social safety nets as intended in 2004 to refer to cash or in-kind transfers that seek to reduce poverty through wealth redistribution and to protect households against income shocks. Food safety nets are a subset of social safety nets as they bypass the transfer of income to assure a minimum level of nutrition and food security and aim to assure minimum consumption at household or individual level. See FAO, 2006, p. 64.

12 See Section II, Guideline 8.

13 See Section II, Guidelines 3.5 and 13.

14 See Section II, Guidelines 10.10 on nutrition, 11.2 on education and 13.4 on channelling food assistance via women; also see Section II, Guidelines 8.2, 8.3 and 13.4.

15 See Section II, Guideline 13.

16 See Section II, Guidelines 7.2 and 13.3.

2. WIDE-ANGLE EVOLUTION OF AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT: POLICYMAKING AND FINANCIAL AS WELL AS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The utility of social protection and the moral imperative for its provision have become difficult to disentangle in the ten years since the adoption of the RtFG. At the global and regional level, commitments have proliferated and opportunities for acquiring financial and technical support have provided ammunition for accelerating dialogue and implementation of programmes.

2.1 Global developments

At a global level, the proliferation of frameworks and approaches that define the objectives, functions and scope of social protection are one example of the depth of analysis the subject of social protection has warranted in the course of the last decade.¹⁷ Frameworks prior to the RtFG were divided into two main approaches. On the one hand there seemed to be a post-Washington consensus in the late 1990s and early 2000s that, outside the bounds of social security for the formal sector, limited social safety nets could be pragmatic for growth, and not an obstacle to it – which meant they could be instrumental in addressing the negative social effects of structural adjustment programmes, and therefore could also be a pillar of poverty reduction strategies (World Bank, 2000). On the other hand, starting from 2000 onwards human rights in development discourse and policy became more pronounced. This began with the Department for International Development’s push for incorporating rights into development (DFID, 2000) and was followed by the ILO’s “new consensus” in 2001 which called for the extension of social security (ILO, 2001). Thus social protection became increasingly conceptualized from a normative angle, viewed as a policy instrument for addressing broader aspects of poverty – not just from the point of view of income poverty or rather depressed human capital, but poverty as an injustice rooted in social structures and symptomatic of both economic and social inequality. This meant underscoring the importance of social development, emphasizing economic and social rights in the development context (including the right to social security, health, work, and an adequate standard of living), and subsequently turning social protection itself into an aim, as opposed to just a tool of development.

Two years after the adoption of the RtFG, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) elaborated its policy message on participation of the poor in growth, saying it requires, *inter alia*, social protection¹⁸ followed by an endorsement of the human rights-based approach. It further stated that “social protection should

17 For example, the World Bank’s Social Risk Management framework (Holzmann, Sherburne-Benz and Tesliuc, 2003), the Agricultural Livelihoods approach (Dorward *et al.*, 2006) and the Adaptive Social Protection approach (Davies, 2009), the asset threshold approach (Carter and Barrett, 2007); the POVNET approach of the OECD, and approaches inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, beginning with DFID’s push for incorporating rights into achieving the MDGs (DFID, 2000), to the Universal Social Minimum (Thompson, 2007), and the Transformative Social Protection approach (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004) and finally the Social Protection Floor launched by the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination in 2009.

18 The OECD’s Development Assistance Committee, starting with its 2001 guidelines on poverty reduction, recognizes social development as a right (OECD, 2001: 19). The OECD policy message on pro-poor growth states: “*The establishment of effective risk mitigation instruments and credible social protection should be an essential element of pro-poor growth strategies*” (2006). The DAC guidance on promoting pro-poor growth via social protection notes the pathways through which social protection contributes to pro-poor growth fall into five categories: (a) human capital investment, (b) risk management, (c) empowerment and livelihoods, (d) pro-poor macroeconomic strategy, and (e) social cohesion and nation-building. These pathways operate by economic efficiency – through better policies and strategies, improved resource allocation, and by effectively taking advantage of economic capacity (OECD, 2009).

be rights-based and focus on empowerment and addressing social inequalities across the lifecycle” (OECD, 2009: 26). Also, evidence from middle-income countries on the poverty reduction, human development and livelihoods promotion potential of social protection (particularly social transfers) contributed to the convergence of the two distinct frameworks mentioned. Impact evaluations of cash transfer programmes from the United Mexican States and the Federative Republic of Brazil as well as the Republic of Chile and the Republic of Colombia inspired their use in low-income countries in Africa and jump started a wave of cross-country exchanges of knowledge and experiences across the globe. The result has been a wider acknowledgment of the value of social protection and its ability to promote development outcomes when it is integrated into national development plans and coordinated with pro-poor fiscal and macroeconomic policy.

Throughout the latter part of the ten-year period following the adoption of the RtFG, FAO pointed at the value of social protection in hunger reduction given how it bridges traditional humanitarian assistance with longer-term development assistance (FAO, 2010). FAO also noted that food assistance itself can contribute to building social protection mechanisms when food provision (as part of safety net programmes) also stimulates markets through local food supply sourcing (FAO, 2010). In addition, WFP began to shift its mandate from food aid to broader food assistance through which it currently supports local markets with its procurement strategy (WFP, 2010).

By 2012, the 39th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) gave its stamp of approval to social protection and its linkages to food security, endorsing the recommendations of the High-Level Panel of Experts on promoting human rights-based social protection schemes for food security. The CFS urged Member States to adopt integrated and mutually-supportive social protection and food security strategies as well as policies based on the right to adequate food, pointing to the potential for integrated programmes to directly support agricultural livelihoods and productivity for the poor (CFS, 2012).

Also in 2012, the Organization of American States (OAS) jointly with FAO declared that social protection is a key element in the fight against hunger (FAO/OAS, 2012).¹⁹ The declaration underscored the importance of a human rights-based approach to social protection as well as institutional guarantees to ensure the realization of the right to adequate food, particularly considering the Latin American historical context of social inequalities. FAO’s Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean had already embarked on examining the links between social protection and food security, through collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) since 2006. Programmatic dilemmas of conditional cash transfers as well as human rights standards for such transfers were an ongoing discussion among the Regional Office, Latin American governments, social protection experts, and ECLAC (under the *Iniciativa América Latina y Caribe Sin Hambre*). From this ongoing collaboration of various actors, lessons emerged about the standards and principles of human rights and the trade-offs necessary for incorporating them in a practical fashion into the design and implementation of cash transfers.

19 The declaration focused on four key factors to maximize the potential of social protection in the area of hunger reduction: 1) intersectoral coordination between social, production, and local development policies; 2) social transfers to secure a decent standard of living, and strengthen access to food; 3) instruments to protect and foster rural development and family farming (that is, access to basic production assets, such as water, land, labour and inputs), and technology transfer systems to promote economic and social inclusion of rural areas; 4) labour market regulation to address issues of informal labour markets, to enforce labour laws and access to social security, and to promote agricultural and non-agricultural employment.

Additional endorsement of a human rights-based approach came from the Rio+20 Conference, when a consensus emerged affirming the importance of food security strategies consistent with the right to adequate food for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and of social protection as key for fostering growth, resilience, social justice and cohesion (UNGA, 2012).²⁰ The World Economic Forum (WEF) also called for a new approach to growth emphasizing that social protection can act as an economic stabilizer during crisis, kick start domestic demand, and pave the exit path from crises (WEF, 2012). This was followed by The Group of Twenty (G20) Summit of 2013 in Moscow, during which best practices for a comprehensive approach to social protection and food security for sustainable development were shared.²¹ Finally, the report of the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda was released with suggestions on nationally determined targets for coverage of poor and vulnerable people, social protection systems as a means of achieving an end to poverty, and strategies to promote resilience through long-term investments in human development (UN, 2013).

2.2 Regional developments

Regional focus on social protection increased also since the adoption of the RtFG. Given that poverty and hunger are more disproportionately spread across Asia and Africa than in any other region in the world, it is important to note the urgency with which social protection has carved a space within policy-making circles of these regions while in Latin America there has been significant evolution of social policy as a means to address food insecurity after the economic crisis of 2008.

Africa hosts 226.7 million people who are undernourished and Asia is home to 525.6 million undernourished (FAO/IFAD/WFP, 2014).²² It is no surprise then to see the mushrooming of social protection programmes in sub-regions such as South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.²³ These regions are also where the world's majority of multi-dimensionally poor live (Alkire *et al.*, 2014).²⁴ There are distinct regional policy dynamics, specific vulnerabilities, political landscapes and the emergence new actors

20 See UN General Assembly Resolution, *The future we want*, para. 108.

21 See <http://en.g20russia.ru/news/20131023/783841578.html> for further information.

22 Whereas hunger is sprinkled among a large number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with a few countries displaying a higher than average number of undernourished (for example, The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia at 32.9 million, the United Republic of Tanzania at 17 million, the Republic of Kenya at 10.8 million and the Republic of Nigeria at 11.2 million), instead in Asia there is a concentration of undernourished populations in Eastern Asia, particularly in the People's Republic of China (150.8 million), and Southern Asian countries with the Republic of India (190.7 million), followed by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (39.6 million), the People's Republic of Bangladesh (26.2 million) and the Republic of Indonesia (21 million).

23 Some examples from Africa are: Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Programme and the CT-OVC Cash Transfer, the Republic of Malawi's Dowa Emergency Cash Transfers and the Mchinji Food and Cash Transfer, Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme, the Republic of Ghana's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty and the Republic of Rwanda's Vision 2020 Umerenge Programme. Examples from Asia are: Indonesia's Direct Cash Transfer Programme (*Bantuan Langsung Tunai*, or BLT) and the CCT Family Hope Programme (*Programme Keluarga Harapan* or PKH) which was launched in 2007; the Bridge for the Filipino Family Programme (*Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Programme* or 4Ps) of the Philippines; the Rural Dikao programme, following the urban one in China; the Islamic Republic of Pakistan's Benazir Income Support Programme cash transfer scheme; and Nepal's 2009 pilot Child Grant.

24 According to the Multidimensional Poverty Index of 2014, which covers 108 countries (home to 78 percent of the world's population), 30 of the population in these countries – 1.6 billion people – are identified as multidimensionally poor of which most live in South Asia (52 percent), followed by Sub-Saharan Africa (29 percent). There is a concentration of 71 percent of the MPI poor in Middle Income Countries. Also, 85 percent of the MPI poor live in rural areas; significantly higher than income poverty estimates of 70 to 75 percent.

(in some cases official recognition of civil society as a partner in policymaking) which have supported the proliferation of programmes and frameworks to support social protection in these regions.

In Asia, social protection came to the forefront after the global economic crisis in 2008, although the region had experienced similar events in the late 1990s. In 2009, following the ratification of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Charter, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint was adopted which treated the issues of social protection, employment and social inclusion in the context of regional solidarity and is now one of three strategic frameworks for implementing the ASEAN Charter (ASEAN, 2009). It adopted a rights-based approach focusing on narrowing the inequality gap in the region.²⁵ The Blueprint emphasized the role of communities in making decisions and taking action for social protection locally, which signifies a readiness to incorporate a wider group of stakeholders in policy-making and programming. This seemed possible as a year earlier the first ASEAN Social Forum had already taken place to facilitate the participation of civil society in ASEAN processes.

In Africa, from 2004 onwards a series of political declarations marked the development of social protection and culminated in a regional framework for social policy. In 2004 the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action pushed the social policy agenda forward and was followed by a Ministerial conference in 2006 in Livingstone, the Republic of Zambia, which recognized social protection as a human right. Thirteen African governments agreed that such a right strengthens the social contract between a state and its citizens (AU, 2006a).²⁶ A few months later, delegates from 12 countries declared the Yaoundé Call of Action recognizing the impact of HIV/AIDS in Africa as well as the burdens it added to the elderly, particularly women, for supporting orphans in rural areas; the Call was to stress the rights of the elderly to universal social pensions (AU, 2006b).²⁷ In 2008 the African Union Social Affairs Commission in collaboration with Help Age International convened national dialogues in Burkina Faso, Rwanda, the Republic of Mozambique, the Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of Sierra Leone, and the Republic of Tunisia, as well three interregional dialogues in Uganda, the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Republic of Senegal, bringing together participants from 38 member states to address a series of issues including food security and the right to social protection.²⁸ Finally, the African Union adopted a Social

25 The components (Human Development; Social Welfare and Protection; Social Justice and Rights; Ensuring Environmental Sustainability, Building the ASEAN Identity; and Narrowing the Development Gap) also are designed to promote inclusive growth by increasing the participation of women, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and vulnerable and marginalized groups in the productive workforce as well as improving the quality, coverage and sustainability of social protection.

26 The conference addressed poverty in Africa and the need to focus on social development against the backdrop of those MDGs not likely to be achieved. The Ministers committed to creating national social protection plans and promoting institutional coordination in order to put together national social transfer plans within three years.

27 The conference noted the role of older people, especially older women, as caregivers without access to formal pensions. It called for the adoption of comprehensive social protection schemes for older people, with particular emphasis on universal social pensions and dissemination of information on the rights of this group.

28 The regional conference for Central and West Africa, held in Senegal, was attended by the governments of Burkina Faso, the Republic of Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana, the Republic of Guinea, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone, the Republic of Niger, Senegal, the Republic of Chad, the Togolese Republic, the Republic of Namibia, and Zambia. Discussions emphasized the right to social protection, the importance of universality, its use as a redistributive tool for lowering inequality, and reducing the risk of food insecurity (more information available at http://www.ipc-undp.org/doc_africa_brazil/Update_AUprocess.pdf).

Policy Framework advising its members to cement social protection in legislation and to ensure civil society participation in policy-making and implementation (AU, 2008).²⁹

As for Latin America, it spurred innovation in social policy, primarily the expansion of subsidized social assistance via cash transfers along with reform of social insurance through the introduction of non-contributory social insurance (pensions and health insurance). Social protection has been characterized, however, with a disconnect between traditional social insurance primarily reliant on formal labour markets and social assistance schemes financed through general revenues (and yet subsidizing the informal sector), in other words, there is a challenge today in Latin America of dualistic benefit systems (Ferreira and Robalino, 2010). However, in 2010, Ministers of Social Development in the region affirmed commitment to strengthening and consolidating institutions responsible for social policy and sustaining social protection systems using integrated development models (OAS, 2010). The Communique of Cali, recognizing the multidimensionality of poverty in the context of national social policy development, stressed intersectoral coordination as a means to broaden the impact of social policy on *inter alia* food security using existing mechanisms within the framework of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development of the OAS. Subsequently, the OAS approved the Social Charter of the Americas whereby countries in the region acknowledged their responsibility to implement comprehensive social protection policies and programmes based on the principles of universality, equality and non-discrimination (OAS, 2012, Chapter III, Article 14). Between 2009 and 2012, the Latin-American Parliament's Economic Affairs, Social Debt and Regional Development Commission developed a Draft Basic Income Framework Law acknowledging basic income as a human right;³⁰ it was eventually passed into law (PARLATINO, 2012).³¹

Against the backdrop of an evolving social agenda in the region, the Latin American Parliament also recognized human rights via the Latin American Declaration on Human Rights (*Declaración Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos*), which includes the right to food and approved a Framework Law On Right to Food, Food Security and Sovereignty, as well as a Framework Law on School Feeding. The regional frameworks serve to further national efforts to integrate food security into social policy underlined with a rights based ethos.

2.3 Technical cooperation and knowledge exchange

Aside from policy making at international and regional levels, social protection has also inspired the development of technical networks and knowledge hubs during the past decade. Key initiatives have emerged for promoting knowledge exchanges on best practices. For example, in the CARICOM Region,

29 The AU Social Policy Framework is based on the African Union's approach to social development that seeks to promote human rights. It recommends that states build political consensus recognizing social protection should be a state obligation; provide for it in national legislation; integrate it in national development plans; design schemes based on a "minimum package" guaranteed through budget lines; and include civil society in all aspects of planning.

30 See record of XV Reunión de la Comisión de Asuntos Económicos, Deuda Social y Desarrollo Regional and XVIII Reunión de la Comisión de Asuntos Económicos, Deuda Social y Desarrollo Regional (both available at <http://www.parlatino.org/es/comisiones-permanentes/asuntos-economicos-deuda-social-y-desarrollo-regional/actas.html>) for details on its introduction and development.

31 The English draft of the framework law is available in *The Basic Income Idea Spreads in the American Continents*, a paper presented to the Twelfth Annual North American Basic Income Guarantee Congress in New York City on May 9th to 11th, 2013 by Senator Eduardo Matarazzo Suplicy of Brazil.

a Network-Based Capacity Building on Social Protection Strategies initiative (also known as Puente in the Caribbean Programme) was launched in 2007 in Jamaica to promote knowledge on social protection strategies and build capacity in social development policy and programming in the region based on the success of a rights-based programme in the Republic of Chile.³² To date, Barbados, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Republic of Suriname, and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago have received technical assistance from Chile through the initiative. To broaden the scope of exchanges to a regional level, a community of practice of policy-makers and practitioners known as the Inter-American Social Protection Network was established in 2009, mandated by OAS as a mechanism for supporting horizontal cooperation and learning networks in the region. The Network's "partnership for development" model for promoting collaboration between stakeholders from national, sub-regional, and regional institutions has been fruitful in disseminating of knowledge about various initiatives across regional mechanisms and technical know-how on successful social protection programmes – including the institutional, legal and political background in which they operate.³³ This has facilitated demand driven concrete exchanges between country level practitioners who seek ways to adapt successful programme models in their given country context.

In 2010, the South-South Learning on Social Protection Gateway was launched following the visible gains from the Africa-Brazil Cooperation Programme on Social Development, established in 2008. Through south-south cooperation, Brazil played an instrumental role assisting Ghanaians design the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty programme, which is the cornerstone of the human rights-based National Social Protection Strategy of Ghana (Republic of Ghana, 2007).³⁴ Other countries such as the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Republic of South Africa, and Zambia have also benefited from technical contributions under the Africa-Brazil Cooperation Programme.

The South-South Learning Forum on Social Protection and Labour has provided opportunities for knowledge exchange and learning from *Bolsa Familia*, the *Cadastro Unico*,³⁵ and the *Brasil Sem Miséria* Plan. As recently as March 2014, the Brazil Learning Initiative for a World without Poverty was launched to share aspects of the success of these programmes in tackling poverty. The World Bank has been supporting exchanges and country visits of practitioners too. It set up a community of practice (CoP) for cash transfers which includes 19 African countries. There are also regional social protection and labour

32 The programme originated in the Social Network for Latin America and the Caribbean which promotes cooperation among the region's Social Development Ministries. With the support of the OAS Secretariat, the activities involve knowledge sharing on best practices with regards to programmes focused on poverty reduction, taking the *Programa Puente* (developed by Chile's Solidarity and Social Investment Fund) as a source of inspiration. This involved visits to Chile from representatives of Caribbean ministries as well as official Chilean visits and on-site assessments of national adaptations of the programme in the Caribbean. Chile's *Programa Puente* has been successful in terms of the impact on the poorest of the poor, using a rights-based approach by means of a systematic and integrated process of psychosocial support and cash transfers coordinated services.

33 For more information see summary of IASPN's 2012 workshop in Santa Marta, Columbia entitled *Innovation and interchange: Social protection in practice. Third Workshop on Social Policy and International Cooperation: The Challenge for Social Development Ministries and the Inter-American Social Protection Network* (available at http://socialprotectionet.org/sites/default/files/social_protection_in_practice_-_web.pdf).

34 The National Social Protection Strategy vision is the "creation of a society in which the citizenry are duly empowered with the capacity to realize their rights and responsibilities to manage social, economic, political and cultural shocks" (Republic of Ghana, 2007: 8).

35 *Cadastro Único* is a unified registry for non-contributory social protection programmes targeted at low-income populations – apart from programmes in education and health. It is the database on which *Bolsa Familia* is based, and currently contains information on circa 23 million low-income families and 78 million registered people.

CoPs operating in Africa, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa regions.

2.4 Development partners and technical coordination efforts

Alongside the south-south learning and cooperation platforms, the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board, mandated by the G20 Development Group, was set up very recently to coordinate development partners supporting country-led social protection policy and programming. Chaired by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank with representation from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), FAO and many other stakeholders, the Board is working on harmonization of concepts, definitions, classifications, data collection methods and impact assessment tools, as well as promoting in-country capacity to build and manage data on social protection in order to promote efficiency in policymaking and programming. The work builds on several already existing databanks from the ILO (the ILO Social Security Inquiry Database covering 124 countries), the International Social Security Association (ISSA Statistical Database on Social Security in Developing Countries), the World Bank (ASPIRE) and the Asian Development Bank (SP Index), as well as data from the European Commission (EUROSTAT) and the OECD.

2.5 Financial assistance and innovation

The RtFG recommended commitment of national financial resources for social programmes in guideline 12 and encouraged States to seek innovative sources of funding both private and public and both national and international levels to finance such programmes. Financial support has indeed considerably increased during the past decade with a growing acknowledgment that social protection is not expenditure, rather an investment for development. This has been spurred by the triple crisis of 2008. For example, the OECD's DAC endorsed a policy statement in 2009 which encouraged donors to provide adequate, long-term and predictable financial assistance to allow developing countries to build social protection systems. Also in 2009, the World Bank set up a Rapid Social Response Program (RSR) with contributions from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Kingdom of Norway, and the Russian Federation to support International Development Association (IDA) countries to build basic components of social protection systems. After an independent evaluation of its 2000–2010 safety nets portfolio, whereby the Bank was told to focus on building safety net institutions during stable times to allow countries to reach the poor more effectively during crises, the Bank committed US\$61.7 million of RSR resources in 2011 to promote 41 projects in 34 countries. That number has doubled, with RSR currently supporting 83 projects from large-scale to pilot stage interventions. This has resulted in a five-fold increase in its lending portfolio for and IBRD countries (World Bank, 2013c).

Avenues for financing have also emerged amid strong arguments that, given the requisite political will and fiscal commitment to social spending, even low-income countries can afford social protection (Hagemejer and Behrendt, 2009; ILO, 2008). Also, experts have noted that aside from loans, financing requires incentives for fiscal reallocation, larger tax bases and capacity to collect revenue. There is room for innovation in creating fiscal space, using tax policy and solidarity based measures to finance social protection. There are efforts to promote national ownership and sustainability of social protection through domestic financing which coincide with the ILO Social Floors Recommendation

No. (202) in some countries. For instance, the Republic of Costa Rica and the Republic of Mauritius have converted military spending into social protection spending (ILO, 2014a). Mongolia's universal child benefit is financed through tax on copper exports (ILO, 2014a). Similarly, the Plurinational State of Bolivia has used its natural resource endowments and found fiscal space for its universal social protection policy-based programmes, *Renta Dignidad* and *Bono Juancito Pinto*, using capitalization of state assets and renationalization of the hydrocarbon sector (Durán-Valverde and Pacheco, 2012).³⁶ On the other hand, Ethiopia and the Republic of Zimbabwe benefit from multi-donor funds while in contrast the Republic of Colombia has seen a gradual process of fiscal independence, culminating with a recent law stating cash transfer expenditures must be financed through the internal revenue system (Paes-Sousa, Regalia and Stampini, 2013).³⁷ A question of political will seems to be the underlying factor here although for many low income countries the assistance of financing institutions might be imperative still from the standpoint of sustainability.

Recently, incentives for financing have emerged in the form of Cash on Delivery Aid³⁸ and result-based models for loans, such as, the World Bank's Program for Results lending instrument which links release of funds to development-based performance indicators that are adapted for social protection (Honorati, Rawlings and Van Domelen, 2011). In some cases this works very well with rights based agendas. For example, Kenya's National Safety Net Programme which seeks to harmonize five social protection programmes across two ministries, is tied to a Program for Results lending instrument with development indicators that include governance aspects of programming, such as the creation and functioning of grievance mechanisms, as well as streamlining of management information systems (MIS).

Even the speed with which aid is delivered has increased this past decade with innovative financing mechanisms. For example, Ethiopia's Risk Financing Mechanism (RFM) ensures commitments from donors prior to any crises. During a period of drought in 2011, it enabled scaling up of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) within a faster timeline than humanitarian responses in order to enrol an additional segment of the wider population. The programme provides transfers to chronically food-insecure households from February to August. When it became clear in 2011 that highland areas of the country would need longer support, and 3 million people in addition to the 6.5 million existing beneficiaries would need transfers, the government used the RFM to ensure three months support to 9.5 million people until the harvest in November. Whereas a humanitarian appeal was made in March and most of the commitments were delivered December of that year, too late to ensure food security, instead the RFM funds were delivered within six weeks (Hobson and Campbell, 2012). The RFM was also used in 2008 and 2009, in response to increasing food prices and failure of belg rains, to provide higher transfers to existing PSNP beneficiaries affected by the crisis (World Bank, 2012).

36 *Renta Dignidad* is a non-contributory pension scheme, launched in 2007, through which Bolivians over 60 years of age receive income support. It is funded by *Fondo de Renta Universal de Vejez*, a fund financed by 30 percent of all funds received by the State from direct taxes on hydrocarbon exploitation, as well as the dividends of public companies that were capitalized in accordance with the proportion of shares owned by the citizens of Bolivia (Durán-Valverde and Pacheco, 2012). The programme currently reaches 1 million elderly people (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2014:22).

37 See Article 8 of Law 1532 of 2012, cited in Paes-Sousa, Regalia and Stampini, 2013. The Republic of Colombia has slowly covered 80 percent of the budget of *Familias en Acción* (now *Más Familias en Acción*), as the programme, which was fully financed by loans its first five years (covering 514 000 households in 2005), has now, in less than a decade, reached 2.8 million (as of 2012).

38 See Perakis and Savedoss, 2014.

Along with innovative financing, creative tools have proliferated to assist practitioners in handling various questions about costs. For example, questions of affordability can be addressed with the ILO Social Protection Costing Tool which allows users to estimate the cost of different measures and to examine affordability, scope and extent of coverage as well as estimated impact on poverty reduction in various scenarios (see Section IV for a discussion on affordability).

3. INCLUSIVENESS OF PLATFORMS FOR DECISION MAKING: MULTI-STAKEHOLDERS

The RtFG in Guideline 6 distinctly recommended multi-stakeholder approaches to developing food security strategies even as States were acknowledged as primary duty bearers for the realization of the right to adequate food.³⁹ In addition, the RtFG envisioned partnerships with NGOs, civil society and the private sector with specific emphasis on participation of civil society in development.⁴⁰ To that end for example European Union has supported civil society social protection platforms in their advocacy and coordination roles. The Finnish Federation for Social Welfare and Health has provided support to strengthening civil society in the United Republic of Tanzania through the Tanzania Council of Social Development.⁴¹

3.1 International NGOs with national presence or outreach

During the past decade, a number of international NGOs have worked at national level supporting participation of civil society in programmes, enhancing capacities to engage beneficiaries and increasing their awareness of rights to social protection. Oxfam International, Help Age International and Save the Children have been active in this area. Help Age International Kenya currently is breaking new ground in Northern Kenya where it is entrusted to deliver the rights component of the Hunger Safety Net Programme. Through a network of civil society organizations and local NGOs, Help Age has set up over 3000 rights-based committees and is heavily involved in capacity building, awareness raising and management of grievance mechanisms in the programme.

Transparency International's Economic Equality in Latin America programme supports civil society organizations to evaluate transparency, accountability and beneficiary participation mechanisms of conditional cash transfer programmes and pinpoint weaknesses to be addressed through collaboration with programme officials. The programme is active in Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Honduras, Guatemala, Peru and the Dominican Republic. It is designed to promote human rights given the marginalization of indigenous communities who are beneficiaries of many programmes and given gender based corruption that has smeared otherwise very successful cash transfer programmes in the region.

Another interesting example is a global coalition of civil society organizations, supported by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), that is promoting the UN Social Protection Floor Initiative and advocating for the

39 See Section II, Guideline 6.

40 See Section III, No.14 on partnerships and Guidelines 3.8, 4.3, 5.4, 11.11 and 14.7 noting the emphasis on civil society participation.

41 This has been in support of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) programme on *Strengthening civil society's participation in social welfare and development*. See the annual report of the ICSW for 2008 (available at http://www.icsw.org/doc/Annualreport2008_ENG_1May09.doc).

implementation of social protection floors worldwide (See Section IV).⁴² FES embarked on elaborating a civil society roadmap for social protection to promote understanding of the floor by new stakeholders, to provide information to orient organizations on the theme, and to enable national and international networking (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2013).

3.2 Civil society forum in Asia

Looking at Asia, there has been an ongoing civil society campaign for the inclusion of transformative social protection in the ASEAN agenda. The Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF), an interregional network of progressive civil society organizations across Asia and Europe, has been the key engine and facilitator of this process. At its seventh forum in 2008, during a caucus of representatives of poor people's groups, the need for handling the impact of the global financial crisis on the poor and marginalized was debated; proposals were set forth to support an interregional *Reclaim People's Dignity*⁴³ campaign to pursue transformative social protection as a human right and as a necessary response to chronic crises.

The following year the AEPF adopted the campaign and created the Network for Transformative Social Protection, which includes progressive social movement groups, activist scholars and parliamentarians especially from Southeast Asia. The Network has been promoting the realization of basic human rights and engages with decision-makers and institutions at local, national, regional and interregional levels. Among its demands are job guarantees, universal health care, adequate food (especially for children), and universal social insurance including pension for old age. In its first Communique in 2009 it addressed ASEAN countries as well as governments of the North and South; requested the ASEAN Human Rights Commission conduct a review of member countries on the fulfilment of the right to social protection and on promoting human rights education; pledged to work on country-specific studies and strategies for transformative social protection as national policy; and expressed interest also in linking with Latin American civil society for best practices.⁴⁴ Both social protection and food security also featured prominently in discussions during the 9th Forum of the AEPF in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic in 2010. Four themes were discussed as People's Visions, three of which being relevant and linked to right to adequate food: Universal Social Protection and Access to Essential Services, Food Sovereignty and Sustainable Land and Natural Resource Management, and Just Work and Sustainable Livelihoods.

3.3 Civil society platforms in Africa

The landscape in Africa is dominated by the Africa Platform for Social Protection (APSP), which has been growing since 2008 and spawning other national platforms such as the Southern African Social Protection Experts Network (SASPEN) in Zambia and the Social Protection Actors Forum in Kenya. APSP works as both a network and an umbrella organization, including stakeholders at local,

42 FES in 2012 co-sponsored a Civil Society Forum along with the Division of Social Policy and Development of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) which resulted in the 2012 Civil Society Declaration: "Pathways to Poverty Eradication: Civil Society Perspective 2012", in anticipation of the 50th Session of the UN Commission on Social Development (see http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?page=article_s&id_article=3606).

43 For further information on the campaign, see <http://www.aepf.info/campaigns/reclaim-people-s-dignity>

44 See Communique at <http://www.aepf.info/campaigns/reclaim-people-s-dignity/37-sea-meeting-communique>

national and regional levels and promoting engagement in social protection policy-making, programming and practice. Its network of CSOs spans 30 African countries, and the organization works closely with platforms in 23 countries performing a range of activities from advocacy, to training, to fostering knowledge exchange and building capacity of its member organizations. The impact the organization has had at the global and regional level has been impressive; for example, it has conducted civil society consultative meetings on the World Bank's Social Protection Strategy for Africa (2011–2020) and reviewed the draft African Development Bank Social Protection Strategy, in addition to organizing a number of social protection related conferences across Africa.⁴⁵

SASPEN was founded in 2011. It includes governments, international organizations, social security funds, civil society organizations, grassroots and stakeholder organizations, university institutions, private research and consultancy firms, think tanks, media representatives, political activists, and general members of society. Its mandate is to create the space for engaging in social protection, to provide a forum for debate and discourse among experts and stakeholders, and to support the development and implementation of social protection in Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. Its recent accomplishments have been conducting a technical conference on Building Policy Coherence between Social Protection Floors and National Social and Economic Development Strategies, as well as the publication of a policy brief exploring social protection definitions and frameworks and the underlying political currents of different approaches.

Notwithstanding the fact that there are some signs of budding civil society organizations taking part in social protection agenda setting, regulatory frameworks that determine the extent of activities and bureaucratic hurdles for civil society organizations to effectively function must be taken into consideration before assessing the real potential of CSOs in development contexts.⁴⁶ This is to say that a presence of civil society actors must be examined along with whether there has been space for *influencing* actual decision-making processes. The issue is beyond the scope of the study but cannot be left untouched if we are to examine multistakeholder approaches in further depth.

3.4 Engaging parliamentarians and harnessing their power

A combination of factors, including the way in which donors themselves engage in country settings and whether the right State actors are included in the discussion, are questions that have come up over the past decade. For example, the fertilizer subsidy programme in Malawi was debated heavily in parliament, but that was not the case for the social protection policy. It was seen as a technical process rather than a policy-making process and is argued to have left out very important actors from the process, including relevant parliamentary committees and local governments (Chinsinga, 2007).

Supporting national stakeholders is a necessary strategy for building dialogue on rights and participatory decision-making in anti-poverty and anti-hunger policy and law making. Social protection is no exception to this. A scenario worth replicating is that of an agreement between the Regional Hunger Vulnerability Programme and SADC-Parliamentary Forum – the RHVG/SADC-PF Dialogue on Poverty and Social

45 See AU-EU partnership site for details at <http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/success-stories/africa-platform-social-protection-0>

46 See for example the Africa CSO Platform on Principled Partnership-supported study by Paul Okumu (2011) entitled *Democracy, AID and Disenabling Environment: Motivation and Impact of Disenabling Environment on Development Work in Africa*, which discusses disabling environments for CSOs in Africa.

Transfers Initiative – created in 2008 to increase knowledge and understanding among parliamentarians and their staff of the role of social transfers in poverty reduction (Rook, 2010). The initiative exposed 550 parliamentarians and staff to a range of issues relevant in social protection; an additional 200 underwent in-depth policy dialogue workshops (Rook, 2010). This resulted in concrete, individual-level initiatives; for example, following the sessions, a member of the parliament of Zambia forwarded a motion in the National Assembly requesting that government provide a detailed report as to when it planned to scale up a social transfer programme nationally (Rook, 2010). Thus, at the very least the possibility of setting the agenda or influencing decision making was enhanced with this initiative.

Recognition of the critical role of parliamentarians has in Latin America has resulted in the development of the Parliamentary Front Against Hunger of Latin America and the Caribbean (supported by the *Iniciativa América Latina y Caribe Sin Hambre*). The Parliamentary Front was created to serve as a platform uniting regional, sub-regional and national legislators, promoting legal frameworks for the realization of the right to food and supporting the design and implementation of participatory processes to include civil society in the fight against food insecurity. The Parliamentary Front has been critical in promoting the inclusion of food security into the political agenda of Latin America and can be harnessed in the development of social policy which sees food security as a symptom of multidimensional poverty.

3.5 UN supported multi-stakeholder dialogue

Inclusive decision-making has been promoted by the UN in its efforts to promote social protection systems. The ILO, in close collaboration with UN agencies, development partners, country line ministries (including labour, social welfare, finance, planning, rural development), CSOs and even local governments has been leading Assessment Based National Dialogues on Social Protection to take stock of existing schemes, coverage, and budgets, and to identify policy gaps and priority areas for intervention in various countries.⁴⁷ The process aims to crystalize the priorities of national actors considering their specific context, determine whether the minimum guarantees for income security and health are met, and point to how much it would cost to bridge gaps in coverage and adequacy of benefits. It culminates in recommendations of scenarios of policy and programme implementation projected over a ten-year period that can be effective for a country. The process avails of the ILO SPF Policy Gap Assessment Matrix and the Rapid Assessment Protocol for SPF Advocacy which facilitates discussion on design and implementation gaps, preliminary costing and the search for fiscal space. The assessment matrix is filled through collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, using face-to-face consultations and workshops at both national and subnational levels. The process is very much a multi-stakeholder approach promoted by the RtFG as it raises awareness and increases the capacity of local and national stakeholders to analyse the issues, voice their concerns and suggestions, and create a nationally defined social protection agenda together. It can potentially also serve as the basis for a platform for dialogue on larger issues related to rural development and food security.

So far the Kingdom of Thailand, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and Indonesia have conducted such dialogues. One notable result of this process emerged in Indonesia where the dialogue led to a recommendation to design and pilot a Single Window Service for social protection programmes at the local level, with the aim of providing information to potential beneficiaries on guarantees and

47 For further information see <http://www.ilo.org/gimi/gess/ShowTheme.do?tid=3825>

services, facilitating registration, updating beneficiaries' databases, facilitating appeals mechanisms, and improving coordination among programmes. Thus, the intrinsic value of this approach of engaging all stakeholders as proposed by the RtFG remains not only in the fairness of practice but in how practical solutions for operational challenges can come from diverse actors.

4. THE SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOOR, ITS AFFORDABILITY, AND THE EMERGENCE OF A SYSTEMS APPROACH

The Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPF-I) was adopted by the United Nations System Chief Executive Board in 2009 as one initiative among many in response to the global economic and financial crisis. The initiative is led by the ILO and World Health Organization. It consists of a Social Protection Floor Advisory Group, a global Technical Cooperation Network, and National Task Forces that are deployed to support capacity building at the country level. The ILO's Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) was adopted by 185 member states of ILO in June 2012. It affirmed social security is a human right and an economic and social necessity. It provides guidance to countries in establishing and maintaining national social protection floors as a fundamental element of comprehensive social security systems (ILO, 2012). It also defines a set of essential guarantees and services to ensure the realization of rights embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: notably, the right to an adequate standard of living (including the right to adequate food), the right to health, the right to water, the right to education, the right to housing and the right to social security. These guarantees can be realized by a set of transfers and services, as defined at the national level.

The main thrust of the Recommendation is to promote universal protection through at least a minimum level of income and livelihood security and access to health via a nationally defined social protection floor *as a priority*; commitments that ensure *progressively higher levels of protection and greater coverage* within context-specific social protection systems remain nationally driven. Universal protection includes at least some minimum guarantees of social protection *across the life span* of an individual, regardless of how poor he or she is. The Recommendation seeks a set of outcomes rather than specific benefits and is limited by reference to residents defined by countries, therefore, unregulated migrants are not addressed unless countries define the scope of residency in a way that includes them in offers for guarantees. This has implications for the right to adequate food and for the food security of migrant populations or displaced people in fragile or conflict ridden contexts.

The SPF-I has gained tremendous support in the past decade from the OECD and the G20. It was endorsed by the World Economic Forum as a means to accelerate the pace of development (2012). At the regional level, the ASEAN leaders have adopted a Declaration on Strengthening Social Protection reaffirming their commitment to fostering social protection floors in the region – aligning ASEAN with the ILO's Recommendation No.202 (ASEAN, 2013). The AU Social Policy Framework also promotes the social protection floor, and a number of countries in the region have provided the testing ground for building the components of national floors (UNDP, 2011). A noted sub-regional policy instrument similar to the social protection floor developed in the past decade is the Code on Social Security in the Southern African Development Community adopted in 2008 which provides guidelines, minimum standards and principles for implementing social security and recognizes social assistance as an entitlement

(SADC, 2008). It is on the principle of variable geometry whereby Member States can move at faster rates than others and allow for replication of successful measures by other States as is implied in the principle of progressive realization of rights. The Code is progressive in its inclusion of migrants and refugees as entitled to social security (SADC, 2008, Article 17).

4.1 Social protection package, affordability, and coherence with international sectoral commitments

The social protection floor consists of a set of nationally-defined, basic guarantees to all members of a society, not just vulnerable or marginalized groups, to access a minimum of goods and services at all times. The basic social protection package includes four basic guarantees: access to at least essential health care during the life course and at least basic income security for children, persons of working age and older persons. The income guarantees provide one path for purchasing food or for converting the value of a transfer into an asset that generates income for a household. They protect access to nutrition for children who are dependent on their caretakers. Health care bears upon the amount, variety, and type of foods needed by individuals, based on their age and health status, and can also bear upon conversion of food to measurable nutritional health status. The extent to which these guarantees are affordable can therefore impact food security and the progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

Data from middle- and low-income countries suggests a basic package of benefits may be affordable in countries experiencing various stages of economic development (ILO, 2011).⁴⁸ The exact percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) necessary to finance the entire package of guarantees might vary given the a country's context but so far the ILO has provided estimations of costs in low-income countries in Africa and Asia looking at twelve countries. The estimated cost of developing a basic package ranges between 3.7 to 10.6 per cent of GDP (ILO, 2008).

Real costs of programmes and services that provide the guarantees in the package might be an area for further inquiry before drawing conclusions on the affordability of a basic package given the variety of social protection systems, real gaps of coverage, and what is already known about the costs of different types and combinations of programmes in various contexts. For example, South Africa's system of grants which includes the State Old Age Pension, the Disability Grant, the Child Support Grant, the Foster Child Grant and the Care Dependency Grant represents 3.5 percent of GDP. The Kingdom of Lesotho's Universal Old Age Pension scheme introduced in 2004 has averaged 1.6 percent of GDP over a recent period of five years (World Bank, 2012). In comparison, a select number of cash transfer programmes in Latin America show budgets hovering below 0.5 percent of GDP (Huang *et al.*, 2013, cited in Paes-Sousa, Regalia and Stampini, 2013).⁴⁹

48 Recent IMF indications that fiscal consolidation has taken place since 2010 as a second-phase response to the global economic crisis, and that from 2014 through 2016 public expenditure contraction may intensify, can raise concerns about effective coverage as far as social protection floors are concerned. The main policy options considered for contraction which relate to social protection include phasing out subsidies, increasing taxes on consumption, and more narrowly targeting social assistance (Ortiz and Cummin, 2013, cited in ILO, 2014b).

49 Programmes considered in the analysis are Brazil's *Bolsa Família*, *Bolsa Escola*, *Bolsa Alimentação*, *Cartao Alimentacao* and *Programa de Erradicação do Trabalho Infantil*; the *Colombian Familias en Acción* and *Ingreso para la Prosperidad Social*; PRAF and Bono 10,000 of the Republic of Honduras; Jamaica's PATH; Mexico's *Oportunidades*; and *Juntos* in the Republic of Peru.

Regional differences are also noted in the literature on funding a basic level of guarantees. Projected costs for transfers to children, the elderly, and the unemployed in 16 Latin American countries run around a maximum of 5.7, 1.6 and 6.4 percent of GDP respectively.⁵⁰ This is higher than the basic package (without health costs for comparison) in Africa and Asia which presumably would range from 2.2 to 5.1 (ILO, 2008). In the case of Latin America, budgets have tended to grow over time as coverage expands and there is increasing need for supply support. For example, Mexico's *Oportunidades* doubled during the period 2001–2011, and the Republic of Colombia's more than tripled between 2003 and 2010 (Huang *et al.*, 2013, cited in Paes-Sousa, Regalia and Stampini, 2013). It is not clear whether this kind of scenario would take place in Africa or Asia although nor is it not conceivable given growth prospects in resource rich countries of Africa and demographic changes that might necessitate higher coverage in Asia. Overall, programmes and schemes must be tailored in size and type given the context, the needs of the population and available resources, and the modality of support must match what is financially and institutionally feasible to implement in a country. What seems obvious is the need for joint domestic and international cooperation and effort to invest in the social protection and bring about the capacities for implementation of nationally defined social protection systems.

However, there exists also an issue of potentially incoherent commitments at the international level that bears on the question of affordability at national level or prioritization in fiscal policy. For example, social protection expenditure itself becomes difficult to separate from sectoral expenditures where objectives of both overlap. This is evident when countries already have regional or international sectoral agreements related to a variety of sectors. Sub-Saharan African governments are signatories to specific instruments that call for spending targets in sectors linked to social protection that are nevertheless treated separate from it, such as health, education, water and sanitation, agriculture, and infrastructure (Hagen-Zanker and McCord, 2011). The cumulative burden of these targets might create competition between ministries for necessary budgetary resources if such targets are to be met simultaneously with social protection (Hagen-Zanker and McCord, 2011). This suggests that prioritization and better integration of planning from a multisectoral approach is often necessary. Coherence may be a challenge in terms of commitments made per sector and the multisectoral strategy required for delivering basic social protection packages. As the right to adequate food is implicated in the provision of social protection generally, a note of encouragement is the fact that progressively expanding coverage and benefit types as in the social protection floor's universal but progressive approach there is room for progressive realization of the right to adequate food as well. Countries can build on what is already in place and slowly consolidate targets using intersectoral planning and coordination mechanisms. They can take steps to align legal and budgetary frameworks related to social protection and adapt processes to gradually increase institutional capacity and efficiency so as to match delivery and supply capacity with the financial resource base available to them.

Increasingly the challenge of affordability will be linked to the imperative to harmonize policies and reassess organizational structures and processes that are involved in social protection programme implementation. The World Bank (2012) and UNICEF (2012) along with ILO (2001, 2012) have called for a systems approach to social protection (World Bank, 2013a). They have prompted developed countries to consider coherence in interventions – partly in response to fragmentation and piecemeal programming across developing countries at national level, and partly owing to lack of coordination of stakeholders

50 See ECLAC, 2010, cited in ILO, 2011: 44.

at the field level. The systems approach promotes coherent and coordinated policy, programming and administrative units (World Bank, 2013a). Although systems is defined differently by each organization, they agree effective social protection systems are characterized by synchronized and coordinated policies and programming (both vertical and horizontal); equitable distribution of resources and opportunities; transparency, accountability and stakeholder participation; and inclusive policies and programmes designed to address not only the chronic poor, but those who suffer from structurally rooted dimensions of exclusion based on gender, disability, ethnicity and geographic location (World Bank, 2013a). It is hard not to see the obvious parallel with what the RtFG recommended such as good governance and the PANTHER principles in Guidelines 1.2 and 2.6 and the use of comprehensive, coordinated, holistic approaches to fighting poverty and hunger.⁵¹

The analysis of systems necessitates moving beyond the RtFG recommendations for safety nets and examining aspects of the Guidelines not in the ambit of this study such as health, education and labour issues. Some of these are discussed in the accompanying thematic studies and might offer insight. Moving from policy instruments and new theories on how to approach social protection from a systems point of view to implementation in national contexts dotted by institutional gaps in structure, resources and skills is a more pressing concern. In practical terms creating systems requires merging institutional frameworks and mechanisms already in place and mobilizing stakeholders across a variety of sectors and levels of government only to reconfigure their roles and responsibilities vis a vis a new system and enforce a new institutional culture. On a technical level, systems require harmonizing the implementation process cycle and setting up single registries to be cross referenced by various programmes. Experts recommend the use of households as the basis for registries, that is, the use of a household card to allow planners to tailor programmes to the needs of households (in the case for planning complementary services) as opposed to providing incentives for households to adjust themselves in order to fit into a programme (Ayala Consulting Group, 2014).

Harmonisation of processes presents a challenge for rights based programmes as each step in the process cycle can result in failure of delivery of an entitlement if the implementers do not have the capacity to run the cycle or do not have training in standards of procedure.⁵² Also setting in place complementary interventions along with social transfers in a systems setting requires intense collaboration across sectors. This is an area that presents an opportunity for training in human rights based principles and their practical use in operations and in integration of programmes across the board as new systems are shaped in the coming years.

51 The components for systems that work (such as the World Bank and UNICEF) are, for example, interventions that address both social and economic vulnerabilities, policies and programmes with short- and long-term approaches, division of roles and responsibilities, and institutional arrangements that provide effective cross-programme management. This is not any different from RtFG recommendations on good governance, working public institutions, and short- and long-term policy and strategy formulation. See Guidelines 1, 2.4, 3.3, 3.9 and 5.1 for details.

52 Ayala Consulting Corporation proposes a scheme for implementation of integrated social safety net systems which includes assessments on supply capacity, targeting, enrolment, compliance, transfers, monitoring, data sharing and case management.

5. SOCIAL PROTECTION: A CLOSER LOOK AT FOOD SECURITY CONTEXTS

As previously mentioned, the RtFG recommended social protection in the form of food and social safety nets as well as measures to promote livelihoods through provision of resources and assets in Guidelines 8 and 14. In general, social transfers with general poverty reduction objectives or specific food security objectives both can enhance access and availability of food.⁵³ Programmes designed principally to target beneficiaries in crises contexts are necessary as short term solutions which can ideally develop into longer term programmes. Transfers targeted to the rural sector can enhance long term food security by promoting production and income generation activities. Food procurement models can be capitalized to boost school feeding programmes but trade-offs on the quality and quantity of food impact the extent of realization of the right to food. Following are highlights from the past decade on three scenarios where social protection has been linked directly to food security and the right to adequate food as envisioned in the RtFG.

5.1 FAO and social safety nets in times of crisis

Throughout the past decade FAO provided knowledge on how social safety nets can serve as support systems to alleviate food insecurity in times of price volatility and in protracted crises. In the case of price volatility, at the household level, high prices result in an immediate decrease in capacity to access food and supply an adequate diet to household members (FAO, 2011). Thus, households are forced to take on additional work, to engage in negative coping mechanisms (like selling their assets or eating cheaper and less nutritious food), or to force children into labour. Price volatility can also make it difficult for households to plan ahead, take risks and invest their resources; thus, they remain vulnerable to shocks and disasters.

Price volatility can also affect availability of food when an increase in prices for inputs results in supply shortages. In return, if exports are curtailed this exacerbates global prices, and the domino effect carries over from international markets to other national markets. Social safety nets in this context act as a buffer (along with emergency reserves and market interventions) particularly in countries that already have them in place and can scale them up, i.e. by adding new beneficiaries, increasing transfers, and simplifying and speeding up the processing of applications for eligible beneficiaries. During the 2008 crisis, for example, Brazil expanded *Bolsa Familia*⁵⁴ (with an update on the poverty lines, the benefit value and extension of coverage) allowing 1.4 million additional families to benefit from the programme that already had 11 million beneficiaries in 2008 (ILO, 2011). Along with programmes to promote family farming, the expansion promoted food security and nutrition such that there was a 31 percent decrease in the risk for a beneficiary family of having a chronically undernourished child, and a 64 percent decrease

53 Any programme that directly or indirectly has a positive impact on dimensions of food security (access, availability, stability and utilization) or sustainability of access and availability across generations has impact on the realization of the right to adequate food. For vulnerable groups, like children, the timing of such programmes is particularly important because nutrition in formative years has an impact on mental and physical development, which in turn impacts success in schools, in finding employment or in future generating income for security.

54 *Bolsa Familia* is part of the Zero Hunger strategy set up in 2003. It is a conditional cash transfer that benefits poor families with tiered payments based on poverty levels hinging on household income and number of children. To receive the cash benefit, families must send school-age children and adolescents to school, keep an up-to-date record of vaccination and health checks for children, and comply with prenatal care for pregnant women and nutritional care for individuals between 14 and 44 years old.

in the risk of having a chronically undernourished baby of 7–11 months. Nine out of ten families reported an increase in their access to food and seven out of ten reported being able to consume a larger variety of food items (Graziano da Silva *et al.*, 2011:104). Currently the program reaches 13.8 beneficiaries from low-income families and accounts for approximately one-third of expenditures on food security and nutrition programmes and actions in Brazil. (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2014).

In the case of protracted crises, the first order of response is food assistance, because regions most affected by crises are characterized by high levels of undernutrition and recurrent high levels of acute malnutrition (FAO, 2010). Social protection in these contexts has generally been short or temporary, externally funded, and relief based. Institutional challenges are high as well in such crisis contexts, and the logical imperative is to overcome them in order to lay the foundation for broader scale programmes. The ideal solution in such a scenario is using food as part of a safety net, eventually stimulating markets through large scale local procurement, or stimulating consumption through injection of cash and vouchers to boost demand and enable recipients to purchase food themselves in local markets over a period of time when those markets have been resuscitated.

In the interim, moving from relief to rehabilitation also works to rebuild community assets, preserve livelihoods and increase household resilience. For example, the Republic of Haiti has used both food and cash-based safety nets to rehabilitate communities. Between 2008 and 2010, the country witnessed food price-related riots, three consecutive hurricanes, a tropical storm and an earthquake. The initial response was blanket food assistance which eventually shifted towards targeted transfers. School meal and nutrition programmes were boosted in the disaster-affected areas and food/cash for work programmes were introduced to help households recover and rebuild community and household assets, thus reducing vulnerability to future risks and increasing resilience (FAO, 2010).⁵⁵

Ethiopia has also demonstrated capacity to build social protection schemes for food security despite its history of famine and humanitarian assistance. The PSNP evolved from 30 years of emergency food programmes to what now serves as a shield strategy against future food security crises. It targets chronically food-insecure households in famine-prone rural areas, providing transfers equivalent to 15 kilos of cereal per household member per month for six months a year. Households where members can work must provide employment service for five days under public works schemes to receive the transfer.⁵⁶ Those that are chronically food-insecure receive the transfer unconditionally – for example, households where adult members are too old or sick, or where no adults exist (Lieuw-Kie-Song, 2011). As mentioned previously, contingency financing guarantees support during times of drought and transient food insecurity whereby new households can be temporarily added to the programme and

55 Currently Haiti has rolled out a National Programme for the Fight against Hunger and Nutrition, otherwise known as *Aba Grangou*, which takes a twin track approach to food security addressing access issues of vulnerable populations (cash transfers, food vouchers, school meals), as well as long term access and utilization issues through support to agriculture and provision of basic public services. Alongside *Aba Grangou*, Haiti has also established a programme for social inclusion and fight against extreme poverty, called *Ede Pep*, which unites 15 social assistance projects ranging from provision of hot meals via mobile canteens to provision of cash transfers to the disabled, food assistance to vulnerable populations, and provision of livestock and inputs. Both programmes signal the commitment of Haiti to progress in the fight against food insecurity although they pose coordination challenges at an operational level among Ministries (see FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2014:28 and details of social assistance programming in Haiti in *Ede-Pep: Les Programmes d'inclusion sociale et de lutte contre la pauvreté extrême du Gouvernement Martelly-Lamothe* (available at http://www.faes.gouv.ht/download/GTR_11714_PARP_programmes_2014-04-23.pdf).

56 The number of days worked by these households is also capped at the level of the benefit to which the household is entitled. Households that are labour-constrained can instead provide services with a labour cap of 15 days per month.

given unconditional support. But PSNP also contributes to long-term food security in that 60 percent of its public works projects focus on soil and water conservation in order to improve the natural resource asset base on which rural livelihoods and agricultural productivity rest, as well as improving the skills of beneficiaries to apply what is learned on their own land.⁵⁷

A lesson emerging from the last decade since the adoption of the RtFG is that it is critical for safety net mechanisms to be put in place *ex ante* – that is, before crisis or disaster conditions emerge. This means identifying the most vulnerable and marginalized before crises hit, conducting disaggregated analysis of their vulnerabilities, understanding the general causes for food insecurity and malnutrition (particularly those of women, children and the elderly) and planning ahead more efficiently and effectively as recommended by Guideline 13. For example, specific target groups that are undernourished might need just as much attention as those suffering from acute malnutrition in crisis contexts, given their specific requirements for daily intake – such as pregnant and lactating women. Knowing who they are, where they are and their likely coping mechanisms (or lack thereof) is imperative for the right to adequate food and for rights based social protection programs that as a priority must pay special attention to such groups.

5.2 Local procurement, food assistance and school feeding: supporting family farms

In Guideline 14.2, the RtFG recommended that food assistance be designed with local farmers in mind, that is, it suggested sourcing supply of food aid from local producers. Public procurement of food has indeed been recognized as an opportunity to make the supply chains work for small-scale food producers, to promote steady income for farmers, and to create demand-assisted growth. There is a distinct advantage for adequacy and cultural appropriateness of diets with such programmes that is in line with the realization of the right to food and must be underscored.

WFP is credited for extensive work in the area of food assistance through local procurement. In 2009, 80 percent of its purchases were made in developing countries, including 12 of 22 countries experiencing protracted crises (FAO, 2010). WFP's Purchase for Progress initiative promotes food security and income for smallholders through procurement for food assistance schemes. Launched in 2008, it now covers 21 countries in Africa, Asia and Central America, and aims to include women as half of its beneficiaries (De Schutter, 2014). It targets small-scale food producers and works through intermediary organizations such as farmers coops (De Schutter, 2014). WFP also implements Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA Africa), modelled after Brazil's Food Purchase Programme (*Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos*).

PAA Africa was launched in 2013 in Senegal to promote food security and nutrition and simultaneously increase incomes of farmers and vulnerable communities. It is currently implemented also in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique and the Niger. It includes training smallholders and associations on growing, processing and selling produce to meet the quality standards required to sell to WFP, and promotes local food purchase programmes that enhance dietary diversity in school feeding programmes. There is a distinct advantage for adequacy and cultural appropriateness of diets with such programmes that is in line with the realization of the right to food and must be underscored.

57 According to one study, almost half of those working in the public works component gained soil and water conservation skills, and this suggests the possibility of increased productivity of their own lands (Campbell, 2008, cited in Lieuw-Kie-Song, 2011).

As a longer term food security strategy, home grown school feeding has grown in the past decade. It was endorsed at the UN 2005 World Summit and has been used in several countries in Latin America like Bolivia, Honduras and Brazil. The Home Grown School Feeding Programme within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme is also an effort to promote public procurement in support of agriculture and food security in rural Africa. The programme promotes local production and local purchases within a country to be used for school feeding to the maximum extent possible. Programmes are now in place in Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya (De Schutter, 2014).

A good case example is one from Brazil. In 2009 a law was enacted stating a minimum of 30 percent of the budgets transferred from federal government to states and municipalities to implement the National School Feeding Programme were to be used to source food from family based farms, including those of traditionally marginalized groups like indigenous communities and quilombolas (De Schutter, 2014). By 2012 80 percent of public schools were purchasing directly from family farmers (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2014). The programme benefited 43.1 million children in 2012 (*Ibid.*).⁵⁸ It is noted for the participation of local stakeholders in the design of the school meals as well as creation of new institutions, aka school feeding committees, that ensure the menus are nutritionally adequate and culturally appropriate (De Schutter, 2014).

Brazil has also been acquiring food from family-based farms through its Food Purchase Programme (mentioned above) which channels supply to local institutions that serve food insecure populations, including food distribution centres and food kitchens. From 2003 to 2009 the number of family farms benefiting from the programme tripled as procurement reached US\$337 million (De Schutter, 2014).⁵⁹ Funding for the programmes has increased tenfold since its inception and currently exceeds \$600 million (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2014:25). The programme offers a 30 percent increase in purchase prices as incentives to organic farmers to promote agro-ecological food production which, from the perspective of the right to adequate food, promotes future sustainability of agricultural assets in line with Guideline 8. India's National Mid-day Meal programme that provides one meal per day to around 150 million children has also recently incorporated a pro-farmer provision, including millet in its list of foods in order to increase the demand for the cereal and enhance farm incomes (De Schutter, 2014).

Local purchases as recommended by the RtFG can boost farmer productivity and promote local food security but the benefit of local procurement is tied to the actual procurement model, in particular who is buying, from whom and in what governance context are key questions. In certain cases, it may be appropriate to buy food directly from farmers organizations and reduce the middle man, thus, ensuring a fair price for producers and reducing income related uncertainty. Local farmers groups, cooperatives and NGOs themselves may get involved in purchasing which makes it likelier that food purchased would be appropriate for local preferences. Yet, there may also be a trade-off between decentralized community level purchasing and the quality and quantity of supply tendered. Public procurement through government bodies at higher levels might offer better guarantees of food quality and consistent supply. The procurement model and the context can therefore have significant

58 According to *Fundo Nacional de Desenvolvimento da Educação*, the programme had 43.1 million alumni in 2012 (see <http://www.fnde.gov.br/programas/alimentacao-escolar/alimentacao-escolar-consultas/alimentacao-escolar-dados-estatisticos>).

59 See De Schutter, 2014, p.9, footnote 30 citing Federal Government of Brazil, *Execução Global do Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos 2003-2009, Orçamentos MDA e MDS*, 16 June 2010.

impact on accessing food and guaranteeing its quality, its adequacy and cultural appropriateness for both beneficiaries (such as children of school feeding programs) and local farmers, i.e. producers or net buyers.

5.3 Social transfers: production and home consumption

There is significant evidence of the economic growth benefits of social protection across various channels, particularly at micro and meso level, namely the household and local economy (Alderman and Yemtsov, 2012). Evidence is limited as to which instruments offer more in terms of benefits versus costs for contribution to overall economic growth but a good sample of cash transfers have provided insight on the potential for social protection to contribute to food security via boosting local production and consumption as well as via spillover effects to non-beneficiaries. These types of transfers fall within Guideline 8 which recommends access to resources, labour, and assets as a means to promote the realization of the right to food.

Promotive social transfers that help smallholders gain and stock assets, avoid distressed sales during times of crisis, diversify investments or consider higher risk investments with higher income trajectories can in fact support household level food security. Cash transfers in the past decade have been shown to help households mitigate the need for negative coping strategies and assist them to invest in productive assets such as land, livestock, farm implements and inputs. Based on acquisition of these assets, households have been shown to sustain their livelihoods and stabilize or increase their food consumption. For example, Mexico's *Oportunidades* programme recipients invested 14 percent of their payments during the first eight months on farm animals, on land for agricultural production and on microenterprises. After nine years these households increased their consumption by 48 percent (Gertler, Martinez and Rubio Codina, 2012 cited in FAO, 2012b: 63). Bolivia's social pension *Renta Dignidad* resulted in consumption increases twice that of the transfer size; the effect was more pronounced in rural households with land as regards consumption of dairy, meat and vegetables and a significant part of the consumption increase was derived from home produced agricultural products such as meats and vegetables (Martínez, 2004). Similarly, the Malawi Social Cash Transfer Programme and the Kenya CT-OVC programme increased the share of consumption, diet quality and dietary diversity from home crop production (Covarrubias *et al.*, 2012, Boone *et al.*, 2012, and Asfaw *et al.*, 2012, cited in Tirivayi, Knowles and Davis, 2013).

Cash transfers can also promote farm output as well as increase the share of food consumption available from home production. For example, in Zambia the Child Grant Programme increased the share of households with input expenditures (seeds, fertilizer, hired labour) by 18 percentage points from a baseline share of 23 percent; the programme thus increased the share of households planting maize, groundnuts and rice (AIR, 2013, cited in Tirivayi, Knowles and Davis, 2013).

5.4 Social transfers and local economy: demand and income prospects for non-beneficiaries

Social transfer programmes may increase consumption directly but they also have indirect impact on food security by enhancing liquidity and trade at a local economy level and stimulating demand for goods. This in turn impacts the income-generating capacity of non-beneficiaries and, subsequently,

the access and availability of food in communities where transfers are distributed. For example, a qualitative impact evaluation of Kenya's CT-OVC transfer revealed a programme targeted to orphans also increased economic exchange in local markets, accounting for a boom in diversification of local products. The impact on local demand triggered changes in the buying and selling behaviour of beneficiaries, which ultimately has an effect on local market traders (FAO, 2014a).⁶⁰ Studies have shown that transfers can also increase economic activity on transfer distribution days at pay points. The Child Grants Programme (CGP) of Lesotho for example is a programme in which the transfer was mostly directed towards meeting the food requirements of the beneficiary households, particularly the food and educational needs of children. Payments were made at one or two pay points per sub-location and even though they were sporadic, they nevertheless provided opportunities for trade at the pay points where petty traders gathered and sold their goods (FAO, 2014b).

Although the evidence on local economy seems suggestive and positive, to maximize the economic impact of transfers, specifically large scale cash transfer programs, it is crucial to understand whether the transfer will stimulate domestic economy and if so whether markets can support higher demand. Otherwise the prospect of generating better outcomes is lost to a rise in demand that negatively impacts beneficiaries of social protection programmes in rural area as well as non-beneficiaries' purchasing power (in price hike scenarios). Some authors have suggested cash transfers and productive investment in agriculture are best when supported side by side as complementary measures as opposed to when they are implemented alone (Levy and Robinson, 2014).

6. SOCIAL TRANSFERS AND THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE FOOD

6.1 Reliability of what is evaluated and the need to focus on processes

Since the adoption of the RtFG, social transfers in Latin America and in Asia have been evaluated extensively, and a series of impact evaluations on pilot schemes continues today across Sub-Saharan Africa. Evidence of their direct impact on food access can be seen in food consumption and food-related expenditures.⁶¹ A typical example from Latin America is the Republic of Ecuador's *Bono de Desarrollo Humano* that increased food expenditures by 25 percent (Ponce, 2008, cited in ILO, 2010). Similarly, in Africa, an impact assessment of the Swaziland Old Age Grant five years after its introduction showed 68 percent of beneficiaries spending more on groceries, 63 percent spending more on protein (meat, chicken and/or fish), and 44 percent spending more on vegetables and/or fruit (RHVP, Help Age International and UNICEF, 2010). But a report on 222 evaluations of social transfer programmes revealed

60 In the case of the CT-OVC, individual market traders were locked into mutually beneficial agreements with beneficiaries who bought fruit and vegetables from the same traders for consumption during the two-month waiting period between payment days. Traders on the other hand were guaranteed sales from these credit-tied beneficiaries. Beneficiaries were able to buy foodstuffs in bulk and began spending money also on household items, including hardware for home improvement and for building homes. To a certain extent the beneficiaries themselves also became little traders, and came out more often to sell foods themselves. See FAO, 2014a.

61 See *Cash Transfer Evidence Paper* of DFID (2011), the HLPE report on social protection and food security (2012), the ILO report on fair and inclusive globalization through the social protection floor (2011), Fiszbein and Schady's 2009 study on conditional cash transfers, and the Slater, Holmes and Mathers (2013) summary prepared for the OECD.

that, of the ten outcomes most often sought and evaluated, food security and food expenditure featured in only 6 percent and 3 percent of the evaluations; in these cases, few exhibited data quality criteria that would render the evaluations reliable (Hagen-Zanker *et al.*, 2011, cited in Devereux *et al.*, 2013).

The linkages between food expenditures, consumption, dietary intake and better nutritional outcomes also need more attention to justify and direct investments to fight malnutrition through social protection programmes. It seems food expenditures and food availability alone do not necessarily translate into improvement in nutritional status (Leroy, Ruel and Verhofstadt, 2009).⁶² Where it is plausible, the link can be affected by the age of the recipient, the size of the transfer and the duration over which the transfer is received. Of these, the most prominent one may be the size and value of the transfer and this suggests transfers must reflect the cost of a nutritious diet and anticipate price fluctuations of food items (Save the Children, 2012).

An additional area for examination is programme processes in terms of how they interact and affect programme impacts. This is where human rights principles can be tested. For example, participation of beneficiaries or civil society can contribute to the outcome of a programme and must be supported as social protection programmes are scaled up. Evaluations can take into consideration the effects of this participation. A case in point is the Project Strengthening Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) through Linking and Learning, implemented by a coalition of CSOs with funding from the Dutch government in two districts of Malawi: Mangochi and Chitipa (Stop Aids Now!, 2012).⁶³ The project focused on improving the management and implementation capacity of the two districts to deliver social cash transfers, with the aim of improving national, district and community level support for the programme as well as creating linkages between the programme's beneficiaries and other social services. Through training, exchange visits between districts, advocacy, awareness building and participatory action research, the coalition managed to address capacity gaps in the SCTP. It also managed to promote more allocation of resources at the local level, which resulted in cash distribution being much more efficient, such as in the creation of more pay points for the programme (*Ibid.*). The coalition garnered support from district officials to link beneficiaries to an input distribution programme, namely the Farm Input Subsidy Program (FISP), thus creating a link that had been missing at the local level between programmes (*Ibid.*). To miss the opportunity to examine effects of participation in real contexts leaves out a part of the picture of the potential for human rights based principles to concretely contribute to coordination at local level via feedback from beneficiaries.

62 For example, a meta-analysis of cash transfers has shown that in Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua programmes were associated with positive and significant impact on food consumption by way of increase in calorie intake and/or increased per capita food expenditures. The analysis shows significant increase in shares of diverse food items consumed - such as meat, vegetable, fruits (see Manley, Gitter and Slavchevska, 2012). The study points out, however, that while cash transfers necessarily imply an increased level of income and overall consumption expenditures, this alone not translated to improvements in nutritional outcomes. The authors state improved access to food alone is not sufficient to improve nutritional status and suggest that better outcomes depend on a variety of factors such as the availability of health services and types of conditions tied to the receipt of transfers.

63 The project was implemented in the districts of Chitipa (January–December 2010) and Mangochi (January–December 2011) by four Malawian organizations in conjunction with the Malawi Government: Network of Organizations for Vulnerable and Orphaned Children, the Institute for Policy Research and Social Empowerment, the Centre for Youth and Children and the Youth Net and Counselling organization.

6.2 Promoting accountability

There are a number of measures that can be applied in social protection to promote efficiency and accountability aside from tight monitoring and evaluation procedures. A few important ones are creating social registries to streamline beneficiary lists, developing MIS modules for various components of a programme, and creating functioning grievance mechanisms to address programme irregularities and exclusion errors. In addition, large scale food distribution schemes which might present problems of leakage can in fact be designed in way so as to thwart the tendency for corruption.

Data on beneficiaries can be unified in a single registry to enhance targeting, to avoid overlap errors in coverage, or to channel beneficiaries from one programme to another. For example, Indonesia embarked on a single registry – the Unified Database, or *Basis Data Terpadu* (BDT) – in 2011, deploying almost 120 000 people to register more than 25 million households in a poverty census referred to as the 2011 PPLS (Nazara, 2013). The census was to identify and register 40 to 50 percent of the poor or those vulnerable to poverty and, based on that data, proxy means testing models were to identify the poorest 40 percent. Information on households was collected, with consultations at the village level and careful elimination of elite bias from village heads and public officials (*Ibid.*). The BDT became the basis for targeting of all family-based social assistance programmes in 2012, including both Raskin and Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH). The challenge is to maintain a dynamic list of potential beneficiaries of such programmes when there is a high concentration of people vulnerable to poverty around the poverty line.

Data management systems are equally useful for promoting accountability. In the case of the Philippines' Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, a conditional cash transfer programme launched in 2008, the government developed MIS modules to track operations and ensure that beneficiaries passed eligibility criteria, received benefits and complied with conditionalities (Giannozzi and Khan, 2011). The MIS system included a grievance module designed to capture, resolve and analyse complaints, using a system of filing cases, assigning tracking numbers to every complaint, assigning a person responsible for follow-up and resolution for each complaint, and producing reports of case resolutions (Olfindo, 2010, cited in Giannozzi and Khan, 2011). In addition, the government used a spot check methodology to check operations at different levels – national and municipal – across stakeholders and service providers to enhance governance, transparency and accountability (Olfindo, 2010, cited in Giannozzi and Khan, 2011).

Grievance mechanisms have been promoted both in humanitarian and development contexts in a variety of programmes that support beneficiaries to claim their entitlements. During the floods that hit Pakistan in 2010 whereby 60 percent of households lost their means of livelihood, the government set up an emergency cash transfer programme to provide relief for 1.8 million families (World Bank, 2013b). A US\$125 million IDA Emergency Recovery Credit fund was established to support the programme, which included the creation of grievance redress mechanisms and a robust public information campaign to inform beneficiaries of the process (*Ibid.*). As a result, grievance redress counters at facilitation centres were set up as well as systems to receive complaints through hotlines and text messages. In addition, a public information campaign about the grievance process was initiated through television, radio, print, and assistance by NGOs and community networks (*Ibid.*). Complaints regarding ID cards, eligibility, payments and mismanagement were encouraged through a system involving village level authorities, district administrations, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), a Provincial Appeals

Secretariat within the PDMA, the National Database Registration Authority, and finally provincial and federal level ombudsmen (*Ibid.*).⁶⁴

Grievance mechanisms function on the basis of rights of beneficiaries and commitment from providers and the State that the mechanisms themselves will be adequately supported and financed. For example, the Vision 2020 Umerenge Program of Rwanda has piloted an appeals and complaints process that includes a Beneficiary Charter on Rights and Responsibilities. Similarly, the HSNP of Kenya uses a Citizen Service Charter which explains the rights and procedures related to complaints. Rights Committees at local level build beneficiary awareness of rights under the programme and to monitor delivery of benefits. Help Age International is currently in the process of connecting the programme's grievance mechanism to an Integrated Public Complaints Referral Mechanism (IPCRM) to boost accountability via an electronic referral system for complaints. The IPCRM's purpose is to strengthen partnerships between state oversight institutions in receiving, handling and managing complaints, as well as enhancing feedback about complaints related to human rights such as discrimination.⁶⁵ Thus, issues beyond programmatic or administrative inefficiencies that may involve corruption or human rights violations can be addressed in appropriate forums. The main idea is to create an interface between State and beneficiaries that promotes trust. Adequately functioning and accessible grievance mechanisms, satisfactory handling of grievances and awareness of rights known are thus a basis for building a social contract.

6.3 Food distribution schemes and measures to control leakage

Large scale public distribution schemes require control of leakage in order to be more effective for food security and poverty reduction. In the case of India, the Public Distribution System (PDS) which serves 160 million households has been crucial for lowering the rural poverty gap by 41 percent between 2004-2005 and 2009-2010 (Himanshu, 2013). The PDS exhibited lower levels of leakage in terms of prices paid and the amount of food grains beneficiaries receive during that period (*Ibid.*). Efficiency gains were due to a variety of factors such as states introducing universal or quasi-universal schemes to avoid exclusion errors, reducing prices for staples (rice and wheat), streamlining distribution mechanisms, the de-privatization of the Fair Price Shops and tracking the movement of grains (*Ibid.*). These measures along with better monitoring and evaluation of the program serve to enhance accountability of the scheme.⁶⁶

64 The World Bank reported that by December 2012, 49 percent of eligibility appeals and 85 percent of complaints had been resolved. This included: 1.087 million eligibility appeals logged, 536 846 eligibility appeals resolved, 139 841 of these resolved appeals accepted for inclusion and issuance of cash transfer debit cards, and 5 500 complaints (non-working cards, requests for bribes, etc.) logged.

65 The commissions and institutions involved are: the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on Administrative Justice, the National Anti-Corruption Campaign Steering Committee, and Transparency International Kenya. Public awareness of the initiative is conducted through church forums, IPCRM ambassadors and a Council of Elders. Complaints referral centres have been set up in Kitale, Nyeri, Wajir, Kisumu and Mombasa.

66 Whereas 54 percent of grains were unaccounted for in 2004-2005, that number went down to 40 percent in 2009-2010 (Himanshu, 2013).

6.4 Special attention to vulnerable groups: women and gender-based concerns

Gender has played an increasingly central role in design and implementation of social protection programmes. The RtFG recommended taking into account women's needs and vulnerabilities. This stems from the principles of non-discrimination and equality. Equality does not necessarily mean equal treatment, rather for those who are socially vulnerable it means special treatment to reduce their vulnerabilities. There is also a practical aspect for favouring women in safety net programming. The RtFG recommended channelling food assistance through women. Evidence has indeed shown that resources in the hands of women as opposed to men have a positive impact on children's education, nutritional status and survival rates (FAO, 2012a). Yet, women are confronted with access to resource constraints in both social and institutional environments. The RtFG specifically recommended taking into consideration such constraints as well as gender-based social vulnerabilities.

Gender-based disadvantages have been noted in various contexts over the past decade. For example, in-kind transfers, such as inputs meant to boost productivity of households, can be undermined if women are thought to be less productive than male workers; the result turns out to be a lower number of eligible women receiving transfers. One example is Malawi's FISP targeted to vulnerable Malawians who own land. Its objectives included increasing food security at the household level through agricultural output growth. Beneficiary targeting involved registration of farm households, allocation of coupons to districts, and village development committees (subsequently open meetings and community-based mechanisms) to identify the vulnerable groups. A 2010 study found that young female-headed households were less likely to receive complete input subsidy packets than households headed by older males (HLPE, 2012; Chibwana and Fisher, 2012). Land ownership constraints of women can also be a mediating factor in cases where transfers are used for investing in production. For example, Mexico's Programme of Direct Support for the Countryside (PROCAMPO) cash transfers for farmers led to larger agricultural investments by male beneficiaries because they own land, whereas this was not the case for female beneficiaries who most often do not (Davis *et al.*, 2002, cited in Tirivayi, Knowles and Davis, 2013).

Constraints specific to social protection instruments also exist. For example, in the case of public works programmes women are confronted with time poverty, competing domestic demands and burdens, and inappropriateness of working hours or types of labour required in projects. An illustrative example of how to address such issues comes from India. India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, adopted in 2005, launched the biggest public works programme in terms of numbers of beneficiaries – to date at 193 million. The Act guarantees 100 days of employment to rural households on demand, at minimum wage. If employment is not forthcoming within 15 days, the households have a right to payment of an unemployment allowance. The programme focuses on building productive assets particularly related to environmental sustainability such as water harvesting, tree planting, and digging irrigation canals. Some of the pro-women provisions of the programme are that one-third of the employment allocated is for women, the provision of work must be within a 5 km radius of women's homes, worksites must provide crèche facilities, and women must receive equal pay for work of equal value to men's (Nandi and Tavares, 2014).

Although implementation of these provisions has been uneven across different states within India, initiatives such as the Dalit Women Livelihoods Initiative in Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have been

instrumental in improving the economic condition of many women (providing access to work and an increase in the number of days worked for women otherwise marginalized or unaware of their rights), and in promoting women's leadership as worksite supervisors; furthermore, breaking the stereotypes related to women's abilities to do technical work has notably contributed to women's empowerment (Nandi and Tavares, 2014). The law and quotas for women alone don't work without empowering women with skills and fostering community organizing support structures. This too is an aspect of human rights that can be promoted in social protection – empowerment through skills and activities to strengthen social capital.

A different instrument, the conditional cash transfer, presents corruption related risks to women when service providers or agents that certify compliance with conditions abuse women, force them to provide additional services unrelated to the programmes or request bribes in return for their entitlements. Such occurrences warrant strict measures to safeguard women's security and capacity to report abuses without being reprimanded for exposing programme failures. An example of a programme that pays specific attention to women's needs in such contexts is the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program of the Philippines, which has a Gender Action Plan. The programme supports the opening of bank accounts with women's names to promote financial inclusion of women; provides training on citizenship, rights, domestic violence, child care and nutrition; integrates capacity building of staff on gender issues; promotes gender audits; and uses gender-based indicators for monitoring and evaluation (De Schutter, 2013). Following this example, other measures that can be adopted include providing transport to beneficiaries who travel long distances to receive grants, and training fathers on gender-responsive family practices to avoid violence related to women's control and handling of cash, and to promote their role as caregivers.

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout the decade following the adoption of the RtFG, at global and regional level, there has been an increasing acknowledgment of the importance of social protection for food security and the right to adequate food. This understanding has been supported by evidence that social protection can increase food consumption, access to food, and capacity to procure it via asset accumulation. Access and availability seem linked to better nutritional outcomes in the presence of complementary health care interventions. The benefits of social protection seem to lie not only in its direct impact on food access and availability but also in how it promotes productivity and boosts local economies. Large scale cash transfer programmes can also have such impact if the market is ready for absorbing the demand they create. Procurement strategies in food assistance schemes and the idea of supporting school feeding programmes through local procurement carries the potential for wide impact depending on the size of institutional demand and the procurement model used. As evaluations continue to further examine the potential of social protection programmes, wider use of measures of food security outcomes might be necessary to draw finer conclusions that are based on reliable data. This is pertinent also for demonstrating to policymakers the exact link between access and availability of food, dietary intake and nutritional outcomes. Measures of right to food can also be incorporated into evaluations such as the number of complaints generated and resolved by a programmes that promotes food access, availability, utilization and stability of access.

The promising dynamic that has evolved throughout the past decade is the fact that international assistance has indeed been extended on a variety of fronts – technical assistance, financing, knowledge exchange – to support developing countries in creating or enhancing their policies and programmes in social protection. To some extent national ownership is also budding in developing countries to expand protection. The recommendations of the RtFG for states to prioritize social expenditures and find innovative means to finance social programmes (per Guidelines 12.3 and 12.4) are not only endorsed by the international community, but concretely supported and this in and of itself is a step in the right direction for the right to adequate food. Although legislation and legal frameworks promise continuity and sustainability across changes in governments and budget cuts, and are the basis on which State action can be questioned, it is commitment on a financial scale that can support social entitlements and allow States to perform their right obligations to the maximum of their available resources. The legitimacy of programmes lie in the extent to which they are financed, the way in which they are governed, and the relationship they foster between rights holders and duty bearers. In the context of social protection, there is a gap in training practitioners on application of human rights based approaches into programme implementation that can be filled if social protection programmes are to be harnessed for the opportunity they provide the State to come as close to the beneficiaries as possible.

As the stage has opened up for civil society to edge into the policy arena in the regions where hunger predominates, that is Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, a truly multi-stakeholder approach to developing social protection systems is now beginning to take shape internationally while the UN continues to advocate for implementation of the social protection floor at national level. Civil society platforms have emerged in Africa and Asia advocating for rights-based social protection and international NGOs are supporting them to raise their capacity to participate in the governance of programmes. Parliamentarians on the other hand have been tapped as a resource for promoting food security and the right to adequate food within the political context in Latin America. Uniting them at regional and national level has proven to be an effective strategy to capitalize on the power of political elites in order to establish legal frameworks on food security and the right to adequate food and to enhance dialogue involving civil society. It would be opportune to continue these processes and also to begin to look at the effect of participation of civil society on policy outcomes and its impact at a local level on delivery of entitlements.

Endorsements of the social protection floor across a wide range of actors make it possible for entitlements to take shape at national level even as the process adopted to promote the floor leaves room for national prioritization based on political and financial realities. However, at the national level, civil society organizations are yet to be harnessed for their maximum potential to enhance programme design and implementation except for the support provided by a few international NGOs with extensive networks. It is an area worth investment.

As countries step up their efforts to progressively expand budgets for social protection programmes and align them with other sectoral policies, and as systems begin to emerge, it is paramount to build capacity among programme designers and implementers as to how to integrate human rights principles in daily administration of programmes. This would promote further recognition of unique social vulnerabilities that are at the core of social risks faced by marginalized populations to avoid risks of discrimination and corruption and clientelism. Also, building capacity can open up opportunities for sharing best practices as the ones mentioned above: investing in gender-sensitive design, promoting citizen charters, and creating functional grievance mechanisms can be further shared among practitioners.

The enabling environment in terms of policymaking, technical and financial resource availability and inclusive processes is ripe. The evidence base in terms of the connection between social protection and food security is sufficiently convincing. The integration of rights-based principles into programmes is also nascent in some best practices. Guidelines referring to social protection measures and standards for implementation have seen the light of day; so too the recommendation for the international community to assist developing countries – to enable them – to create social programmes and invest in them as one component of the fight against hunger. There is room for improvement in integrating human rights into emerging systems before old patterns are re-institutionalized. Doing so will bear fruit for progressive realization of the right to adequate food.

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of the United Nations

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) would like to thank the European Union for the financial support which made possible the development of this report through the "Improved Global Governance for Hunger Reduction Programme".



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