



SOCIAL PROTECTION

OVERALL GOAL

Social Protection systems are strengthened in support of sustainable rural poverty reduction.

- Rural households face vulnerable income situations and are often exposed to economic and natural risks and shocks that threaten their livelihoods.
- Social protection can address vulnerability, reduce rural poverty and improve food security and resilience. By ensuring predictability and regularity of income and guaranteeing access to basic social services, social protection can enable households to better manage shocks and stresses and engage in more profitable livelihoods, while having a positive impact on poverty reduction and food security.
- 73% of the world's population has insufficient access to social protection. The majority of those excluded are small scale, subsistence farmers, landless agricultural workers, pastoralists, and fisher folks, often residing in remote, disadvantaged rural areas.
- The potential of social protection is not fully exploited especially in rural areas, where it can play a major role in achieving long-term, inclusive and equitable development.
- Social protection needs to be supported by agricultural and rural development policies.

Well-designed and comprehensive social protection systems directly impact food security by increasing investments in agricultural assets, input use, farm output and increasing

the quantity and quality of food produced and consumed in households. They can also impact agriculture by preventing risk coping strategies that deplete households agricultural assets, increasing investments in human capital (child education and health), and strengthening resilience against economic and natural shocks.

Social protection policies and programmes have the potential to reduce vulnerabilities faced by women, particularly in rural areas, where they have less access to land, livestock, labour, education, financial services and agricultural technologies than men. Moreover, it is widely recognized that targeting women as direct beneficiaries of social protection interventions improves the education, health and nutritional level of households' members, especially children.

Social protection measures can positively address challenges faced by youth, which form a major share of rural populations. Well-designed social protection systems should take youth needs into account, in particular regarding rural employment

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

FAO is strengthening its work and capacity to help governments and other stakeholders to address the challenge of an effective mix of social protection, which can: provide direct income support with immediate impact on food security, nutrition and poverty reduction; support rural households in better managing risks; enhance human capital to improve productivity and employability; stimulate local economic development with positive feedbacks on agricultural production, employment, social inclusion and rural poverty reduction; and achieve sustainable management





of natural resources and resilient livelihoods.

The activities for the promotion and implementation of social protection initiatives build on FAO experience in four core areas of work:

1. Building a knowledge and evidence base on the linkages between social protection, food security, agricultural and rural development, and developing analytical and policy tools to inform the design and assess the effectiveness of social protection systems.
2. Providing policy support and advice on the use of relevant policy tools and facilitating policy dialogue among multiple stakeholders to strengthen the linkages between social protection and food security, agriculture and rural development.
3. Developing institutional capacities at all levels to design, implement, monitor and evaluate comprehensive social protection systems that are well complemented by food security, agricultural and rural development policies.
4. Disseminating knowledge, experience and good practices, for effective advocacy of the rights to food and social protection and outreach based on the knowledge and evidence FAO generates.

FAO's work aims to create the commitment of stakeholders to design and maintain inclusive, sustainable and transformative social protection systems for food security, poverty reduction and sustainable management of natural resources, with a specific attention to the gender and youth perspectives.

IN PRACTICE

FAO is currently working on:

- Mainstreaming social protection in national development and food security strategies by providing policy support to the governments and other key stakeholders in Niger,

Burkina Faso and Senegal.

- Evaluating the productive impacts of social cash transfer programmes in sub-Saharan Africa at community and household levels through the From Protection to Production Project (PtoP) project. PtoP also provides evidence-based policy and programme support at national, regional and global level for strengthening coherence between agriculture and social protection. This policy and programme support is influencing decision-making, with findings of the PtoP programme leading to concrete improvements in social protection programme design and implementation, as has been the case, for instance, in Ghana, Lesotho and Zambia.
- Applying social protection approaches to foster sustainable management of natural resources and reduce poverty with a focus on fisheries/aquaculture and forestry-dependent communities in Myanmar and Uganda.
- Developing social protection indicators with a focus on rural areas, developed in collaboration with other international and national partners, as a basis for assessments of social protection programmes on rural livelihoods, women's empowerment, food and nutrition security and poverty reduction.
- Facilitating South-South cooperation and the exchange of experiences to promote social protection in African countries, through policy dialogue and regional social protection learning hubs.

SCOPE FOR DOING MORE AND BETTER

In order to achieve the above results, FAO will work jointly with different partners:

- FAO and WFP are joining forces under a roadmap on linking social protection programmes to policies in support of comprehensive social protection systems for food security and nutrition, agriculture and rural development, for collecting, analysing and disseminating data on risk, vulnerability and food security and designing and implementing safety nets that provide food assistance.
- FAO and ILO are implementing a joint programme of work aimed at developing policy approaches for extending social protection to rural areas and strengthening national social protection floors in alignment with agricultural and rural development policies.
- In the context of South-South Cooperation, FAO has established an ongoing dialogue with Brazil, South Africa and India.
- FAO has partnered with ILO and UNICEF to provide policy support to countries and with the World Bank, ILO, and other agencies for harmonizing and standardizing the indicators and methodologies for social protection analysis and monitoring.

CONTACTS

Vito Cistulli

Delivery Manager,
Social Protection Division (ESP)
Email: Vito.Cistulli@fao.org

Rob Vos

SO3 Coordinator,
Director Social Protection Division (ESP)
Email: Rob.Vos@fao.org

MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.fao.org/about/what-we-do/so3>