

The key issues inhibiting synergies among social protection, rural employment and food security

Policies, institutions and governance

- Lack of policy coherence among different policies, which negatively affecting synergy among social protection, rural employment and food security
 - Lack of a binding national development strategy for social protection
 - Weaknesses in policy implementation
- Inadequate coordination of social protection at country level (policies and programmes as designed and implemented by different ministries)
 - Lack of common understanding of what social protection comprises among different ministries;
 - Inadequate harmonization that would be directing with a clear conception for social protection;
 - Lack of consolidation of national policies and overlapping programmes managed by different government agencies;
 - Community councils and civil society organizations are not fully utilized by all ministries for consultations;
 - Lack of accountability mechanisms for implementing agencies;
 - Poor coordination between partners;
 - General lack of recognition of the role of organized rural women in social protection;
- Poor monitoring and evaluation mechanisms
 - Social security laws are not implemented adequately;
 - Coverage for social security is not universal;
 - Lack of common set of relevant monitoring indicators across different programmes that can be measured and shared across relevant institutions
- Gaps in coverage and targeting - some people not covered especially in rural areas
 - In particular, targeting and prioritization must cover the first 1000 days of life covering pregnant and lactating mothers and children under 2 years of age. Nutrition criteria including stunting (low height for age) would need to be considered in selection, targeting and prioritization of beneficiaries
- Insufficient regional collaboration coordination – among countries of the region (e.g. through ASEAN, SAARC, APEC, etc.)
- Lack of a coordinating body and policy for integrated social protection programmes (existing SP programme to be integrated).
- Lack of bottom up approach to voice local concerns that can influence policy decisions.

Financial constraints

- Insufficient allocation of funds and mobilization of resources.
- Weakness of existing management system.
- Lack of financial sustainability of programmes.
- Social protection is generally considered as recurrent expenditure rather than as an investment.

Knowledge/skills

- Lack of capacity to design, mainstream, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes related to social protection and rural employment.
- Inadequate capacity in translating policies into programmatic action at all levels.
- Lack of sufficient acknowledgement of traditional knowledge on food and care.
- Weak capacity to implement social protection, rural employment in synergies with other rural development and food security programmes at local level, ensure integrated and coordinated delivery of services.

The key points for priority actions and recommendations

National level

Policies, institutions, governance and financial resources

- Undertake reviews and mapping of existing policies and strategies involving social protection, rural employment, food security and nutrition (charting out what exist and identify gaps, needs and scope for complementarities and synergies).
- Reformulate or develop multi-sectorally defined national policies for social protection in consultation, as appropriate with multiple stakeholders.
- Promote food-based nutrition enhancing agriculture approaches and include an agricultural production effort as a central component of a nutrition linked to the overall food security strategy.
- Raise awareness and advocate on the importance of social protection as an investment and promote its linkages with rural employment, agriculture and food security to policy makers and programme implementers.
- Conduct national policy dialogues related to social protection ensuring participation and representation of all stakeholders.
- Social protection floor to be integrated in the UNDAF -social protection to be delivered by ONE UN.
- Establish/strengthen coordinating body for all SPs at national and decentralized levels with well- structured and coordinated system at grassroots level.
- Establish the most effective and evidence-based targeting and monitoring system to ensure SP related support and investment reaches the most vulnerable in the society.
- Establish a strong monitoring system and accountability system.
- Costing of national social protection systems and allocate sufficient financial resources in national budgets.

Knowledge/skills

- Identify most vulnerable groups in society through studies and analysis for targeted interventions.
- Promote the dissemination of success case studies/ best practices which demonstrates practices linking social protection, rural employment, food security and nutrition.
- Identify needs to strengthen capacities to design, implement, monitor and evaluate social protection programmes.
- Provide technical support and training to better target the social protection, including developing indicators.

- Strengthen community based organizations, especially rural women, and develop capacity to support implementation of social protection programmes at local levels.

Regional level cooperation

- FAO and ILO to intensify their collaboration and joint efforts on social protection and food security.
- Promote south-south cooperation, exchange of knowledge, lessons learned and good practices for all aspects of SP among member countries in the region and in other regions.
- Enhance collaboration in organizing SAARC: Social Security meeting, early November (Nepal), in preparation to the SAARC meeting (FAO and ILO could support SAARC to exchange the experience of ASEAN in the development of SP strategy and plan of action, which have recently been developed).
- Promote synergies with sub-regional initiatives such as ASEAN SP and support the strengthening/integration of SP as it applies to rural employment and food security.
- Disseminate case studies/best practices at regional level.
- Formulate guidelines for the preparation of integrated national social protection, rural employment and food security policy/strategy.
- Organize similar regional consultation or forum periodically and review progress against priority actions/recommendations agreed.