

**2023 Development Cooperation Forum**  
**Session III: Building momentum for effective social protection measures**  
**Background Note**

**Purpose/Objective:** Highlight how development cooperation can help to strengthen social protection, reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience to current and future challenges.

**Background<sup>1</sup>**

Committed, strategic investment in people, including through universal social protection, is essential to building the long-term resilience of individuals and countries. In response to the pandemic's impact on lives and livelihoods, developing countries intensified existing social protection measures, and in some instances introduced new social protection programmes to support the most vulnerable – totaling close to 4,000 new measures to respond to the pandemic's economic impact (e.g., through increased investment in cash transfers, social insurance and technological innovations). At the same time, developing countries have highlighted ongoing challenges to their social protection systems: coverage of the most vulnerable; financing; weak legislative and policy frameworks; and insufficient institutional and human resource capacities. Many of these challenges have only been exacerbated by the triple food-energy-finance crisis and subsequent cost-of-living crisis of the past year. Strengthening development cooperation for social protection can ensure that social protection measures protect against diverse risks and enhance their age-, gender- and climate-responsiveness.

Progress on social protection measures and innovations slowed throughout 2022, despite continued high levels of need in the face of multiple crises. Countries should maintain social protection measures that were scaled up during the pandemic until recovery is well under way and ensure continued investment in social protection systems for delivering on the promise of the SDGs. Short-term crisis response should be safeguarded and transformed into elements that could shape long-term, post-pandemic social protection schemes. Social protection is also vital in addressing the food and nutrition insecurity crisis, which requires integrated actions to improve food security outcomes through international humanitarian assistance and ODA. Yet, the global financing gap for essential social protection has widened. By strengthening partnerships formed during COVID-19 and aligning development cooperation with national social protection priorities, the long-term sustainability of social protection measures can be secured. Initiatives such as the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection can also help to channel national and international, public and private investments into social protection for the four billion people who fall outside any existing coverage while creating decent jobs in the green and care economies.

**Guiding questions**

- How are developing countries and their development partners strengthening social protection measures at national and local levels, taking into account multi-dimensional vulnerabilities?
- What are some examples of how development cooperation has effectively responded to in-country social protection priorities during crises, and how can these be built upon for long-term strengthening of social protection systems?

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<sup>1</sup> For more information and data sources, please see the [Report of the Secretary-General: Trends and progress in international development cooperation \(E/2023/48\)](#) and [2022 Development Cooperation Forum \(DCF\) Survey Study: Navigating COVID-19 recovery and long-term risks](#).

- What are good examples of social protection programs that have demonstrated impact in building resilience across multiple systemic economic, social and/or environmental challenges?
- How can social protection measures be strengthened to respond to diverse risks and needs across gender, age and exposure to climate- and disaster-related risks, among others?

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