TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE
UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTION
BY 2030

HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE
5 FEBRUARY 2019, GENEVA

#USP2030

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS
Together, we can achieve Universal Social Protection by 2030

#USP2030
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INTRODUCTION

The following is a report from the ‘Together to Achieve Universal Social Protection by 2030’ conference, organised by USP2030 and the EU Social Protection Systems Programme (EU-SPS), in co-operation with the OECD Development Centre and the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors. This Conference took place at the International Labour Organization (ILO) headquarters on 5 February 2019. The Conference gathered over 180 participants, including high-level speakers, ministers, policy makers and civil society to discuss the achievements and challenges of building universal social protection systems and ensuring sustainable and equitable finance for social protection.

The meeting was an opportunity to hear what countries need from development partners to join the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (USP2030) and to encourage countries in the Global South to adopt the USP2030 Call to Action. The Call to Action refers to earlier member State commitments to develop nationally owned social protection systems for all, including floors, as articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015.
Ms Deborah Greenfield, Deputy Director General, International Labour Organization (ILO), opened the meeting and welcomed participants. She emphasised the essential role of universal social protection as an integral component of social justice and decent work, but also pointed to significant coverage gaps, despite important progress. She highlighted the importance of the conference as a forum to share experiences how countries can accelerate progress towards achieving universal social protection and SDG 1.3. She stressed the important role of the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection (USP2030), which was launched in 2016 at the UN General Assembly by the World Bank and the ILO together with many other partners, in supporting partners to build strong and equitable social protection systems for all. She introduced the Call for Action “Together to Achieve Universal Social Protection by 2030” as a critical step to live up to their commitment to develop nationally-owned social protection systems for all, including floors, as articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, stressing that universal social protection is a human right, and is key to sustained inclusive economic and social development, for individuals, communities and nations. She closed by calling for joint action to reach the ambitious goal of reaching universal coverage by 2030 – just 11 years to turn this ambition into reality.

Mr Michael Rutkowski, Senior Director, Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice, World Bank, emphasised that universal social protection is needed more than ever given current challenges that can only be tackled together; and that USP 2030 provides a model to show how forces can be joined. He stressed the importance of discussions: What does coverage mean, what is the depth that we want to achieve? The conference provided an opportunity to share country experiences, as well as to discuss the role of development partners in supporting countries in building their social protection systems.

Ms. Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner on human rights, in her keynote emphasised the role of social protection for ensuring the inclusion of everyone, leaving no-one behind - as a core goal of development. She stressed that SDG 1.3 flows directly from the universal right to social security, as set out in the universal declaration of human rights, and that USP2030 demonstrated an exceptional commitment to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Referring to ILO research, she highlighted that universal social protection can be achieved in all countries, and mentioned that many speakers in the conference have experiences with setting up social protection (SP) in challenging contexts. She also highlighted that societies that exclude people and do not use their full potential, are losing talents, capacities and skills; and that the lack of social protection also creates tensions and gives rise to conflicts. She stressed that essential services need to remain accessible also in times of austerity, and that prioritization is essential. She also emphasised that social protection systems need to address gender inequalities, and promote women’s empowerment. She closed her keynote by calling on countries to join this partnership, and offered her own support for USP2030.
Ms. Marjeta Jager, Deputy Director-General, International Cooperation and Development, European Commission (EC), started by stressing that social protection is a key policy area of the EU, both internally and externally. She emphasised the necessity of pursuing a global vision, as represented by USP2030. She stressed that the EC has supported countries in strengthening SP systems for years, currently in 26 countries, with more than 1 billion euros. She reaffirmed the EC’s strong commitment to the partnership, and commended USP2030 for embarking on new ways of strengthening social protection systems. She also highlighted the importance of a comprehensive approach that addresses all aspects of social protection; having strong relations with other initiatives, and emphasised the need for a more formal mandate and a more permanent structure for USP2030.

Ms. Gabriela Ramos, Chief of Staff and Sherpa to the G20, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), highlighted the importance of social protection in the current context of increasing inequality and insecurity, to achieve outcomes that are more equitable. She emphasised that investment in social protection systems was necessary to advance development, not only after the economy has developed, and highlighted the need to change the narrative and build a business case. She compared average spending on social protection reached on average 20 percent of GDP (2018) in OECD countries, with the much lower levels of public expenditure in developing countries. She mentioned in particular informality as one of the obstacles to access social protection, and raised the question on how to include people in formal schemes, also in the context of new forms of work and the digital revolution, and how to engage the private sector? She summarised the main messages from OECD analysis, namely to expand social protection to vulnerable and informal workers; to continue to extend cash transfers not only to alleviate poverty but also to provide opportunities for children; and to ensure equitable and sustainable financing for social protection, particularly through tax collection (e.g. fight tax avoidance, ensure integrity). She stressed the OECD’s work in building the business case in which the OECD encourages politicians and policy-makers to see SP as investment, thinking about the adaptation of SP systems to address non-standard forms of employment, and taking into account different country contexts.
Ms. Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), in her video message pointed to some of the key critical challenges, such as conflict, displacement, inequality on the one side, and on the other a higher level of resources, with a world that is three times richer in GDP terms than 20 years ago.

Ms Burrow stressed that financing was a matter of political will and stated that it was unacceptable that 70 percent of world’s population had no or inadequate SP, that governments rolled back comprehensive SP systems, undermining people’s capacity to live with dignity; and that a world of increasing uncertainty and desperation fuelled social distress. She also emphasised that minimum wages were often not sufficient to live on, and that social dialogue and collective bargaining were key for sharing prosperity. She highlighted the role of ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention (No. 102) and the ILO Social Protection Floor Recommendation (No. 202) as a basis, but stressed that it was necessary to go further in building comprehensive social protection systems instead of safety nets.

Mr. Roberto Suárez Santos, Secretary-General, International Organisation of Employers (IOE), stressed the importance of social protection for business in a context of the future of work, with new realities (e.g. digital revolution, artificial intelligence, business models), and emphasised that social protection systems needed to anticipate those challenges. In particular, he mentioned that social stability was essential for businesses, particularly for sustainable enterprises. He stressed that it was time to be ambitious, but also to be responsible and ensure the sustainability of social protection systems in the light of demographic change. He stressed the need to learn from other countries, e.g. in terms of building successful systems and financing, and the necessity to explore different funding options without being dogmatic. He mentioned the need for accurate evidence, such as through impact evaluations and cost-benefit analyses. He also stressed the need to ensure the engagement of private sector and social partners, bringing in the practical concerns of workers and business. He closed by saying that USP2030 will be able to count on the employers’ engagement.
SESSION 1. MAKING THE CASE FOR UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTION

Mr Benjamin Davis, Strategic Programme Leader, Rural Poverty Reduction, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), introduced the session, highlighting the case for universal social protection across four main points:

- Access to social protection is a fundamental right, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and in other major United Nations human rights instruments. Mr. Davis highlighted the example of Kenya and South Africa (members of the panel) where social protection is recognised as a right in the respective National Constitutions.

- Strong economic rationale, as indicated by the wealth of clear and rigorous evidence on the impact of social protection across many sectors: human capital development, future employability, while enhancing the economic potential of the poorest and their risk management capacity; and finally the impact of local economic development. Mr. Davis reminded us about the important commitment of governments, and partners including FAO, UNICEF, World Bank and others that have been working in building the case for scale-up and how to maximize those impacts to support the move from survival to economic inclusion and development.

- Strong environmental and sustainability rationale, particularly relevant in the context of climate-related risks. In this sense, social protection is also a key instrument to facilitate the transition towards more sustainable livelihoods and thus should be part of climate adaptation strategies particularly relevant for the rural poor, who are the guardians of natural resources.

- Importance of social protection as goal in itself, but also as a core element to accelerate progress across many SDGs, while stressing the importance of having an explicit and conscious focus to realize SDG 1.3 in rural and hard to reach areas.

Ms Susan Shabangu, Minister of Social Development, South Africa, discussed the key drivers for the country’s move toward universal coverage of social protection, including the country’s commitment to social protection as per the national Constitution and many global covenants and agreements. She discussed the progress made by South Africa in terms of coverage of key programmes that support individual across the life cycle, including social grants, maternity and paternity leave, minimum wage and other. She reflected upon the strong political will of the Government, as well as the importance of promoting a multi-sectoral approach bringing together different sectors and partners. Ms. Shabangu also discussed how a comprehensive approach to social protection has been fundamental in shaping a more integrate South Africa, in the context of the post-apartheid society, creating opportunities for all. Ms. Shabangu discussed the importance of social protection as a way to close the gap between the poor and the rich; between the sick and healthy and thus a pathway towards more inclusive societies.

Mr Gombosuren Unurbayar, State Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Mongolia, discussed his Government’s specific efforts to expand adequate social protection for those living in rural areas, specifically herders. He shared the key role animal husbandry play in the contribution to the economy and thus the need to define and implement an integrated package and progressively move toward strong legislation to ensure coverage for herders (including in the form of a combination of contributory and non-contributory social protection).
Ms Cecilia Mbaka, Head of National Social Protection Secretariat, State Department of Social Protection, Kenya, discussed the country’s commitment to social protection as reflected in the country’s constitution. She discussed the significant progress the country has made in terms of expanding coverage across flagship social assistance programmes, but also a recent call towards universal coverage for the elderly. She highlighted the importance of evidence, and the clear impacts of many of these programmes in terms of poverty reduction, food security, reduction in child labour, as well as increased access to health and education services. Finally, Ms. Mbaka shared the country’s development of an investment plan for the implementation of the Agenda 2030, as well as the establishment of a Task Force on sustainable financing to ensure that the forward-looking agenda is financed and prioritised.

Ms Mezrioui, Ministry of Social Affairs, Tunisia, discussed the wealth of programmes in Tunisia supporting households across sectors and the lifecycle. She reflected on the some of the challenges currently affecting these programmes including fragmentation, demographic changes, enhancing the effectiveness of targeting, integrating the informal workers into social security, as well as ensuring decent employment for youth. She also reflected on the focus on a multidimensional strategy for poverty reduction, looking at income stability but also access to social services.

Questions from the floor included reflections upon the role of social registries, the role of social protection as part of climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies, as well as the importance of having social protection as state (and not government) priorities.

The session ended with the Mr Davis’s remarks, highlighting the role of Kenya, Senegal, Mongolia and Tunisia as key champions of universal social protection, while also commending their commitment to building a strong evidence base to enhance impact. He also called for continuing focusing efforts on ensuring no one is left behind, including those living in rural areas; not as an afterthought, but as an explicit priority.
SESSION 2. BUILDING UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Ms Kerstin Nagels, Director of Employment, Economic and Social Development at GIZ, introduced the session on the basis of a recent publication “A systems perspective on Universal Social Protection – Towards life-long equitable access to comprehensive social protection for all”, outlining that comprehensive and universal coverage to all can only be ensured by a system in which different programs are coordinated and harmonised within and across sectors and policies. A range of “building blocks”, including processes, governance and management structures as well as operational mechanisms are involved in the development and continuous adjustment of such systems, among them a few that seem particularly critical for attaining universal social protection coverage, such as:

- a national vision shared across party lines and has strong support from the population as well as
- strong institutional leadership needed to rally diverse stakeholders with potentially conflicting agendas around the common goal of USP;
- multisectoral coordination and accountability mechanisms as part of an institutional set-up conducive to realize USP;
- a legal framework, e.g. in the form of a law, rule or regulation, administrative order, or resolution;
- integrated information systems for social protection increasingly used to serve programmes with different requirements and consolidating information to form the basis for a universal (social) registry when expanding coverage towards USP; and
- harmonization of procedures and integrated service delivery as well as beneficiary support.

Which system building blocks were/are particularly relevant in your country to progress towards USP?

Ms MaryAnne E.R. Darauay, Ceso III, Director IV, Social Development Staff, National Economic and Development Authority, Philippines, highlighted that:

"the main building block was a framework from which we could build a comprehensive social protection system (...) and the roadmap to the 'Filipino Development Plan', the first long-term development vision in the country"

In addition, an important driver for system building was an inter-sectoral committee, and in particular the sub-committee on social protection (co-led by NEDA and Dpt. for Social Welfare and Development). A database was the most urgent (one) to identify and act on people's needs, while the legislation had to then follow suit based on this information. In the future, the Philippines aim to no longer require different cards but "to have one same ID card to use different services" (for now only used for cash transfers for Filipinos).
Mr Mukunda Paudyal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal, discussed the crucial sub-systems to be developed under the larger SP system that are the national structure in line with social protection requirements and the legal framework (laws, regulations and monetary evaluations). He stressed the important role of information, but also highlighted that system needs to be designed and used in an effective and efficient way, given the high costs of collecting and processing information. Mr Paudyal also provided his personal reflection on this conference and his main take-way that:

"economic policies need to consider social policies, (...) and I have learned by coming here that we need to integrate social policies in our economic policies to ensure they complement each other and contribute to productive activities as well as overall (socio-)economic development"

Mr Paudyal stressed the important role of both the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare in this regard.

Ms Gabriela Agosto, Executive Director of the National Council for Coordination of Social Policies, Argentina, discussed integrated information management as a key building block for the Argentinian social protection system, mainly relying on two central information systems, due to the importance of sharing information across different levels of government and centralising its management. In this process, she stressed that:

"trust was absolutely important, (...) certainty and clear rules on the use of data needed (e.g. through a law on data use), along with not only the use of this information across levels of government, but also contribution(s) from these different levels"

The session, moderated by Kerstin Nagels from GIZ, concluded that key challenges in the future requiring further discussion and exploration will be: 1) how to ensure universal coverage "on both sunny and rainy days", e.g. by integrating social protection and disaster risk management to address climate-related impacts; and 2) tackling the exclusion of the many migrant workers and other - particularly the undocumented - people on the move.
SESSION 3. ACHIEVING UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTION ACROSS THE LIFE-CYCLE

Mr Alexandre Kolev, Head of Social Cohesion Unit, OECD Development Centre: The main objective of the session is to explore pathways to USP that countries at different stages of development have taken. Road to USP can be difficult. One common challenge is ensuring strong and long-term willingness to invest in the expansion of SP. Impact of SP on inclusive growth: SP can make good economic sense. Another challenge is informality and finding modalities to expand SP in a fair, efficient and sustainable way. Conclusion of ILO/OECD research: adding the household dimension is important for the formalisation agenda, it casts a new way through which SP can reach informal worker through their households. SP needs to be gender sensitive. Information is key for USP, Cambodia and Indonesia examples. One or two programmes can be the foundation for USP, as it was the case in Ethiopia. In other cases, subsidies to contributions are key, like for the health insurance expansion in Indonesia. Fiscal space is crucial, but the fairness of SP financing needs monitoring, Togo example of CEQ.

Can you identify one area of SP where your country has made good progress? What are the pitfalls encountered and steps needed to ensure process is smooth towards USP?

Ms Mirta Denis, Executive Director of the Technical Unit of the Social Cabinet of the Presidency, Paraguay: In Paraguay, the attention is focused on the poorest quintile. Around one third of the population is covered. One example is the health coverage: investments were made in the most vulnerable zones of the countries. But 20% are still not covered. Inequality is also a big problem. Poverty has decreased a lot, but big efforts were made through a participatory approach to find appropriate SP systems. Vulnerability and inequality are big challenges. The private sector, academic, CSOs, have helped politicians and the legislative process around social protection. The priority for Paraguay is not just to have one programme, but to have a system. Biggest challenges are the governance between different sectors of the population. Another challenge is protecting vulnerable people who are not enrolled in social insurance, such as informal workers. Formalisation is a priority.

Mr Maliki, Director of Population Planning and Social Security, Ministry of Minister for Population and Labor (BAPPENAS), Indonesia: There are 265 million Indonesians in 2018. 10% of the population is older than 60 years. In the next 5 years there will be a peak of the young population, so need to optimize the demographic dividend. SP: need better link between health and pension. Importance of Village Fund, access for low income population to access SP. Village Fund is a basic fund that can build basic infrastructure for SP at village level, converting some of the programs to build social cohesion, importance for civil registration. Opportunities for women at village level, for instance through internet access.
Ms Aida Kasymalieva, Member of Kyrgyz Parliament, Committee on Social Affairs, Kyrgyz Republic: Lots of factors affect SP, such as political situation and lack of budget. Population of 6 million people, one quarter in poverty. Focus on overhaul and reform SP in the last 2 years and universal approach. Free education, children are treated in health institution until age 5 for free, and recent bill was introduced on the issue of MBPF. MBPF was supposed to be replaced by three stage system, 85 USD at birth, universal payment for each child up to age 3 (10 USD per month), and allowance for families with many children starting with third child onwards. Research shows that poverty usually starts with 3 children. Several issues in child allowance. Before, the system missed out on a lot of children due to corruption, bureaucratic obstacles due to lots of documentation needed to get benefit. Need to make it easier for families to get benefits to which they are entitled. Bill was signed off by president, but new government, new president, considerable discussions on the fact that wealthier families receiving benefits, in particular in the case of large families. International financial institutions imposed step back, so only birth allowance is successful right now. Working group was set up in the Parliament to get clear picture on problems. Need to work on accuracy of payments and recipients to get poverty levels down. Surveys are being carried out, hope to be able to analyse data soon. Plan running to 2040, hope hit SDG before 2030.

Ms Salome Idhenga, Senior Economist, Ministry of Poverty Eradication, Namibia: Various SP programmes. Implementation of old person grant and disability grant is a success. 93% of old population is covered, 67% of disabled population is covered. 9.6% of population in Namibia receives one of those two grants. Significant progress was made in reducing poverty thanks to those programmes, impacting not just the beneficiaries but also their dependents, for instance with children in those households doing better than other. For every USD spent on this grants, poverty goes down by 0.31 USD. Political commitment was key to achieve these programmes. Commitment also from a fiscal perspective, much of national expenditure is dedicated to SP, current budget has 9% of expenditure goes to cash transfers for old-age, disability, child and veterans grants. Challenges: inequality remains very high in Namibia, and challenge of fragmentation. SP programmes are not effectively coordinated due to a lack of a social registry. People are double dipping, while others are not covered at all. Inclusion and exclusion errors limit availability of funds. Working on a reform to develop SP framework with assistance from UNICEF and OECD. Proposals include development of social registry, maternity and UHC, universal child grant. Proposals also on innovative resource mobilization.

Ms Rachel Moussé, Deputy Director, Social Protection Programme, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), member of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors (GCSPF): Missing middle of informal workers is a crucial issue. 2 billion people in the informal economy, 60% of the labour force, not a homogenous group, no one size fits all. Women are at the base of the pyramid, higher risk of poverty than men due to their working conditions. Nature of work, status in employment and place of work, gender, and stage in life-cycle allows to identify key gaps that governments need to address. Extending social insurance to informal workers is complicated but not impossible. Domestic workers can be protected, but 90% of them are legally excluded from SP. Care jobs is a growing source of employment for women, an opportunity for decent work. Self-employed women: voluntary programs are not conducive to protection. Social assistance schemes can exclude informal female workers, targeting means that women informal workers are not poor enough to get grants because they have an income.
SA schemes focus on those not in the labour force, but coverage rates remain low. Working age population have very few schemes available, even maternity grants, although they are crucial. Conditionalities reinforce women’s caregiver roles. Government should not stereotype women as only mothers or carers. Cash transfers can be of low value: social pensions do not replace women’s income, while still caring for other in old-age. SA is not sufficient response for risks informal women face, such as healthcare. Access to social services AND cash transfers is crucial. Women need guarantee that they can return to work after maternity break. SP cannot replace regulations or protection for workers.

**What are successful example of the extension of SP to women in informal economy?**

**Ms Moussié:** Social insurance is the most difficult. Standard employment relationship is not and has never been the norm in the global south. India: boards were created to protect porters employed by market workers to carry stuff. Latin America monotax and contribution collection mechanism in Uruguay for example allows micro entrepreneurs to be enrolled in social security. It is a success for women self-employed workers. It works because it is cross-subsidised with formal workers. Ghana: a market association, member of WIEGO represent 40K traders and has childcare centres, only 160 children in Accra are covered by childcare centres. Nevertheless, traders have created and cross-subsidised childcare centres. SEWTA was created to provide childcare. Informal workers associations must be part of negotiations in design and implementation of SP, they might be small scale, but they can do pilots. Social insurance extension to informal workers cannot be abandoned, need to pool informal and formal contributions. Financing schemes can enhance or undermine effect on the working poor. Government need to expand tax base, but tax systems are becoming more regressive, corporate tax avoidance, reliance on consumption tax. Indirect taxes such as VAT and municipal licenses affect poor informal workers, in particular women. Progressive financing mix is needed alongside labour regulations.

**Ms Eeva-Maria Mikkonen-Jeanneret, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland:**

**Identify one thing that could help in implementing USP?**

**Mr Maliki:** Health insurance is successful in covering 80% of the population, largest single payer insurance in the world. Strong government commitment and demand side. Government has mandated that BAPPENAS support the poor and vulnerable, especially 40% poorest population. However, there is a missing middle gap. Huge challenge, they easily enrol but cannot sustain their membership, requires intergovernmental effort. Central government supports 40% bottom, local government needs to cover the vulnerable also. UDB is also quite advanced and important, integration of single registry with total population and the bottom 40% is crucial.

**Ms Denis:** Need to ensure a basic basket of SP and the missing middle of informal workers. Social security is the most important, 80% of workers are excluded.
**Ms Kasymalieva:** Problem with violence against children, children are not protected, need to change the situation. Single registry needs to be grouped. Large families need to be helped to be pulled out of poverty. In KR politicians do not understand why we have to help children. Communication campaigns are needed to protect children.

**Ms Idhenga:** Single registry is needed to reduce inclusion and exclusion errors and to help implementation and coordination. Universal child grant is requirement, spending on children is an investment, not an expenditure.

**Ms Mikkonen-Jeanneret:** Life cycle approach is a mindset, need to make a move away from silos of vulnerabilities, transition risks need to be recognize, it is our environment that makes us vulnerable. SP is fundamental; it is a system that allows us to address all points of risks.
Ms Evelyn Astor, Policy Officer, Economic and Social Policy, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), opened the session to recall that despite the numerous international commitments to extend social protection – including within Agenda 2030 - there is very little consensus within the international community on how social protection should be financed. However ILO standards refer to the “primary and overall responsibility of the state” in the provision of social protection, pointing to the need for statutory, publicly organised and financed systems. She also recalled the outcomes of the Global Conference on Financing Social Protection in September 2018, which showcased evidence that financing social protection can be affordable in the vast majority of countries and that governments have a variety of options at their disposal to create fiscal space. Such options include reallocating public expenditures, leveraging progressive forms of taxation and tackling tax evasion, leveraging social security contributions and making sure that employers take responsibility for their workers irrespective of their employment contract, and supporting the transition to the informal economy. She reiterated points made earlier that financing social protection is, to a large degree, a question of political will.

Ms Anta Sarr Diacko, General Delegate for Social Protection and National Solidarity (DGPSN), Senegal, emphasised the importance of domestic resource mobilisation to sustain the recent expansion of Senegal’s social protection system. Senegal will set up a social security fund by the end of 2019, providing innovative and diversified sources of finance. Although Egypt has recognised social protection as a basic right through the 2013 Constitution, the budget for social protection has been relatively small; benefits have been highly targeted on the poor, mostly in Upper Egypt. Egypt finances social protection entirely from domestic sources and has made sustainable and equitable financing a pillar of its strategy for universal social protection.

Ms Nivine El Kabbag, Vice Minister of Social Solidarity, Egypt, highlighted that Egypt provides energy subsidies equivalent to 6% of GDP, an amount greater than spending on health and education combined. Food ration cards are also too widely accessible. The tax system is characterised by high levels of evasion and public spending too rarely reaches the poor. Egypt is committed to improving governance to reduce wasteful public spending, eliminating illicit financing flows, increasing tax revenues and adopting a more flexible macroeconomic framework.
Mr Juergen Hohmann, Social Protection Expert, International Cooperation and Development, European Commission, stressed the point that financing is not the first step in social protection policy making. First, a government needs to decide what it will prioritise, what liabilities it is willing to assume and what kinds of shock it is willing to cover; only then can it devise an appropriate financing strategy. He pointed out that universal social protection (USP) cannot be achieved in three or four years but that the European Commission uses budget support to help countries to progressively implement USP. Budget support accounts for 30% of the European Commission’s official development assistance (ODA), although a very small proportion of its overall ODA goes to social protection. Budget support gives responsibility to national governments, who are able to influence the objectives related to social protection. It also helps with inter-sectoral policy making. Sound public financial management (PFM) is a prerequisite for budget support to deliver; technical assistance is always an important component of budget support. The European Commission has launched a project with ILO, UNICEF and the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors to examine budget support and PFM for social protection.

Mr Plamen Dimitrov, President of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (CITUB), Bulgaria, stressed that financing USP is a matter of political will as well as affordability, and it goes to the heart of the social contract. He also emphasised the importance of employers contributing to social security on behalf of their workers and expressed concern at a shift in the world of work whereby employees are increasingly financing their own contributions. Even in the informal economy, workers are part of a supply chain that includes formal sector and which should make a contribution. Bulgaria has introduced a Silver Fund to strengthen the pension system.

The discussion that followed identified a number of important issues confronting the financing of social protection. These included how to expand social protection at a time of global austerity and the perennial debate around targeting versus universality. Finally, it was recognised that countries will not bear the cost of social protection if they don’t fully understand the benefits it brings, such as the contribution to GDP growth. Mr Hohmann stated that the European Commission wants to change the perception of social protection as current investment to being an investment in human capital, peace, inclusive growth, resilience and equality.
Ms Isabel Ortiz, Director of the Social Protection Department, ILO, emphasized the progress achieved over the past five years during which we have seen the strong commitment towards universal social protection in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development adopted in 2015, and notably target 1.3 of the SDGs where countries agreed to implement national appropriate social protection systems for all, including floors. This was followed in 2016 by the launch of the global partnership for universal social protection at the UN General Assembly which is expanding since then. Yet, she recalled that these recent events are part of a history of more than a 100 year development of extension of social protection. It is our duty to ensure all countries have universal social protection, meaning covering everyone for all contingencies across the life cycle from childhood to old age, including also maternity, disability etc. She further outlined important steps in the process of achieving social protection, including building consensus among stakeholders at national level through a national dialogue, identify gaps in social protection and determine related priority interventions for closing them, calculate the cost of these and identify the possibility of expanding the necessary fiscal space and discuss the financial and human resource implications with the Ministry of Finance. She elaborated that while financing is often perceived as the critical issue, social protection is affordable in many developing countries. The costs of a universal social protection floor are estimated to range between one and nine percent of GDP. Measures to increase fiscal space for social protection include reallocations of public expenditures such as reducing energy subsidies, increasing tax revenues, increasing social security contributions, fighting illicit financial flows, lobbying for increased aid, tapping into fiscal and financial reserves, restructuring debt, adopting an accommodating macroeconomic framework.

Ms Anush Bezhanyan, Manager, Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice, World Bank, elaborated on the expansion of the global partnership for Universal Social Protection with an increasing number of members and explained that the Call to Action launched at this conference was aiming to mobilize countries to expand social protection to all and to join the partnership. Development partners should likewise join the partnership and harmonize their activities when supporting countries in their strive towards universal social protection. The Call to Action is first of all a call to expand social protection coverage to all as reflected in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Second, coverage should be provided throughout the life cycle and be anchored in national legislation. Third, these commitments for universal social protection need to be embedded in national strategies and fully country-owned. Fourth, sustainable and equitable financing is key to ensure the stability and fairness of the social protection system. Finally, all this should be carried out through an inclusive process, with representatives of relevant organisations. She then explained how countries could join the partnership. Partners should share the vision of the partnership and contribute through activities in knowledge exchange and advocacy. More information for joining is available on the webpage www.usp2030.org or by contacting the Interim Steering Committee at secretariat@usp2030.org.
Ms Armanda Berta Dos Santos, Minister of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, Timor-Leste, stated that Timor-Leste is honoured to be one of the countries that are considered champions of Universal Social Protection. And indeed, building a strong social protection system is a key national priority and the right to social protection is anchored in the Constitution. Following the conflict and independence, the focus lay on providing in kind benefits to meet most essential needs. The current system comprises 26 policies and programmes implemented by six ministries. Programmes include: universal old age pensions, universal disability pension, subsides for veterans and liberation combatants, a mother allowance, programmes for children: immunization, malnutrition, protection from violence, education, school feeding, universal free health services through community health services to improve access, contributory social security schemes. She hopes that her country’s experience will inspire other countries to achieve universal social protection.

Ms Eeva-Maria Mikkonen-Jeanneret, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland, observed that all countries have their own histories and distinct paths, but a common theme is the principal of human rights when it comes to universal social protection. While no model can be copied and pasted anywhere, the story of Finland remains important when thinking about what is possible. Three critical measures were introduced in Finland after the civil war: Universal free primary school with a free school meal, a universal pension, a universal child grant and a baby box. Four lessons could be drawn from this experience that have lasted for the century: first, a country does not need to be rich to begin the journey to universal social protection. In Finland, investing in universal social protection created the security and opportunity for driving prosperity. Second, social protection improves social integration, social stability and social cohesion. The third lesson: Wisely designed SP systems can reduce poverty and inequality and advance sustainable development. Finally, one of the impacts of social protection is a reduction of gender inequality through measures such as maternity protection, gender sensitive pensions, also, universal child grants, universal education, reduction of child mortality and improvement of child health benefit disproportionality the girl child. Finland, through EU’s SPS programme, has been working closely with partners in 11 countries in Africa and Asia to support partners to systematize the national capacity development for social protection. She concluded by welcoming countries to join the USP2030 partnership as a commitment and a joint path in a world of uncertainty where the importance of social protection is growing.

Mr Pungky Sumadi, Deputy Minister for Population and Labor, Indonesia, observed that the story of Indonesia’s journey towards universal social protection has started more recently, in 2005 but has marked similarities with other experiences shared during the conference. Back then, Indonesia had 45 social assistance programmes, 8 different social security schemes, mostly with low coverage, low impact and financing problems. Reforms started in 2005 aimed to consolidate and reduce the number of programmes that should then be implemented nationwide. Now, Indonesia has only 14 programmes organised in four pillars: economic support or productive social protection pillar including vocational and SMS training, microcredit and community economic groups second, the basic social services pillar covering gas, electricity, water, sanitation, and housing third, the labour related , social security pillar including also health insurance and finally, the social assistance pillar including scholarships, conditional cash transfers and rice subsidies. Social protection coverage has been part of the development accomplishments in Indonesia, unemployment rate stands at 5.4%, 3 million jobs created, the poverty rate at 9.66%, down from 26% in the 90ies, Gini at 0.384. Indonesia is thus moving towards upper middle income countries and aims to provide better jobs and improved welfare. But coverage of informal economy workers, the missing middle, remains still a challenge. Indonesia has set itself clear targets for the future regarding universal social protection and the SDGs, including to increase health insurance coverage from now 80 to 96 percent by end of 2024 or to increase coverage of informal workers from 24% to 30%. The budget allocated to social protection is in the order of 13.7% and the aim is to increase this further to achieve universal social protection by 2030. Indonesia looks forward to working together to achieve Indonesia’s USP2030.
Ms Maria Jesus Miranda, Ambassador to the United Nations and International Organizations in Switzerland, Cabo Verde, observed that it was a great honour, but also big responsibility to participate in the closing session and to share the experience of Cabo Verde. The right to social security is inscribed in the Constitution of Cabo Verde. In 1982 Cabo Verde created a social insurance system that foresaw already at its inception the progressive extension to all workers. In 2001, the basis of a complete and holistic social protection system was established that was composed of contributory benefits, non-contributory benefits and services. Progressively, Cabo Verde has been able to offer better and better protection to its citizens. Some recent measures, include for example the implementation of the unemployment insurance, the only of the nine branches that was still missing; a minimum wage regime, a supplementary pension for Cape Verdians abroad, the adoption of the national health care and services plan, the increase of coverage of old age pensions by 20% and the increase of the ceiling for co-payments of medical costs to 50 per cent.

Cabo Verde strived to build a system that ensures social protection for all members old persons, in case of maternity, disability, persons in economic vulnerability also as a contribution to maintaining a healthy democracy. Two key priorities for Cabo Verde are the continued extension of coverage, maximizing available resources. She emphasised that economic stability, inclusive growth and universal social protection are interdependent. Reforms have been implemented to create a National Social Security Council to coordinate actions of all stakeholders and the creation of a pension fund organised by an independent body. Additionally, she recalled the importance of measures to modernize the system, rationalizing costs, using modern technology, reducing bureaucracy are essential. She also emphasised the importance of partnerships at national, regional, and global level in order to mobilise resources and share experiences. USP2030 provides excellent prospects to intensify collaboration.

Ms Nicola Wiebe, (Bread for the World, representing the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors (GCSPF), elaborated that the Global Coalition for social protection floors was a collation of 100 CSOs, trade unions, think tanks who share the vision of universal social protection. As such, the coalition highly welcomes the initiative and the Call to Action. What the coalition would like to take-away from this conference is a commitment to take concrete steps towards the implementation of USP systems that are rights based, gender sensitive and providing adequate benefits for all contingencies along the life cycle. Welcome the emphasis of a universal approach designed to overcome exclusion, targeting and fragmentation, leading to solidarity and cohesive societies. The coalition would like to offer and ask for the effective participation of civil society and trade unions in dialogues on social protection at national, regional and global levels. CSOs and trade unions play an important transformative role in realizing the right to social protection. They often successfully include disadvantaged or excluded group by supporting the organization of women and men and their communities. Furthermore, civil society organizations play an important role in raising awareness-on social protection and empower people to demand for the extension and transformation of social protection systems.

She recalled our joint international responsibility to support countries to create and protect their fiscal space, e.g. also improve international coordination on to reduce tax evasion and avoid excessive tax competition. Social protection budgets also need to be defended in times of crisis and disasters. This includes adequate social protection spending in austerity periods. Further cooperation was needed to improve global solidarity mechanisms that can provide the needed support, not being able to muster that level of financial solidarity is a violation of human rights. There is enough expertise and experience and good ideas that there is now an important momentum to reach USP that we should not let go.
Mr Florian Höllen, Senior Policy Officer & Member Interim Steering Committee USP2030, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany, thanking members of the USP2030 and the organizers of the conference, the EU and OECD. He marked out three messages for the way forward. First, the importance of moving from poverty-targeting to triggering, reminding the audience of the high exclusion errors of proxy means testing. Targeting the poor does not mean reaching the poor but often the opposite: the poor are excluded. Universal approach seems to better succeed in building inclusive programmes. It would therefore be much better to think about people and situations that trigger a certain benefit. Second, the importance of banning barriers. The partnership for universal social protection should at least ensure that there are only steps forward and no more steps backward. Countries should know that going towards USP will always be supported. Third, just join: There are still seats in the Interim Steering Committee – encouragement not only to join the partnership, but also to take responsibility for it.

He elaborated about the governance structure of the global partnership and its Steering Committee. What Germany expects is a broad representation, a strong mandate and legitimization anchored in the UN system, for instance within the Commission for Social Development, but also other relevant UN bodies. Additionally, it would be good to seek the appreciation of other groups of countries like the G7, G20 or G77. This conference is intended to be the start for this participatory method of working. However, there are also other champions of universal social protection that were not current at the conference that would hopefully also join.

**Expression interest of countries/groups:**

- Secretary General of ISSA announces commitment of ISSA to join USP 2030. ISSA committed to be a member that delivers. ISSA can collaborate with USP 2030 in three main ways:
  - Increase the network of USP2030 through its own large network with more than 300 members in 156 countries
  - ISSA can help USP2030 to ensure better delivery of services that are efficient and effective
  - Enhance the capacity of institutions through technical support
- Representative of France on the ILO governing body: France will chair G7 this year under the slogan “Reducing Inequality”. French Labour minister is organizing a meeting of Ministers of Social Affairs. One of the four main topics will be universal access to social protection. France is making a formal commitment that the five actions in the Call to Action presented at the conference will be discussed at the meeting.
- Announcement of Paraguay to join USP2030
- Announcement of South Africa to join the Partnership
ANNEX I
PROGRAMME

9:00 – 10:00 Opening session
- Ms Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Ms Marjeta Jager, Deputy Director-General, International Cooperation and Development, European Commission (EC)
- Ms Gabriela Ramos, Chief of Staff and Sherpa to the G20, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Ms Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) (video message)
- Mr Roberto Suárez Santos, Secretary-General, International Organisation of Employers (IOE)

Co-chairs:
- Ms Deborah Greenfield, Deputy Director General, International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Mr Michal Rutkowski, Senior Director, Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice, World Bank

10:00 – 11:15 Session 1. Making the case for universal social protection
- Ms Cecilia Mbaka, Head of National Social Protection Secretariat, State Department of Social Protection, Kenya
- Ms Susan Shabangu, Minister of Social Development, South Africa
- Ms Mezrioui, Ministry of Social Affairs, Tunisia
- Mr Gombosuren Unurbayar, State Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Mongolia

Moderator: Benjamin Davis, Strategic Programme Leader, Rural Poverty Reduction, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

11:15 – 11:45 Coffee break

11:45 – 12:45 Session 2. Building universal social protection systems
- Ms Gabriela Agosto, Executive Director of the National Council for Coordination of Social Policies, Argentina
- Ms. MaryAnne E.R. Darauay, Ceso III, Director IV, Social Development Staff, National Economic Development Authority, Philippines
- Mr Mukunda Paudyal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal

Moderator: Kerstin Nagels, Director of Employment, Economic and Social Development, GIZ

12:45 – 14:15 Lunch
14:15 – 15:45 Session 3. Achieving universal social protection across the life-cycle

- Ms Mirta Denis, Executive Director of the Technical Unit of the Social Cabinet of the Presidency, Paraguay
- Ms Aida Kasymalieva, Member of Kyrgyz Parliament, Committee on Social Affairs, Kyrgyz Republic
- Mr Maliki, Director of Population Planning and Social Security, Ministry of Minister for Population and Labor (BAPPENAS), Indonesia
- Ms Salome Idhenga, Senior Economist, Ministry of Poverty Eradication, Namibia
- Ms Rachel Moussié, Deputy Director, Social Protection Programme, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), member of the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors (GCSPF)

Moderators:
- Mr Alexandre Kolev, Head of Social Cohesion Unit, OECD Development Centre
- Eeva-Maria Mikkonen-Jeanneret, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland

15:45 – 16:15 Coffee break

16:15 – 17:15 Session 4. Ensuring sustainable and equitable financing for universal social protection

- Ms Anta Sarr Diacko, General Delegate for Social Protection and National Solidarity (DGPSN), Senegal
- Ms Nivine El Kabbag, Vice Minister of Social Solidarity, Egypt
- Mr Plamen Dimitrov, President of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (CITUB), Bulgaria
- Mr Juergen Hohmann, Social Protection Expert, International Cooperation and Development, European Commission

Moderator:
- Ms Evelyn Astor, Policy Officer, Economic and Social Policy, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

17:15 – 18:15 USP2030: The way forward

- Ms Armanda Berta Dos Santos, Minister of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, Timor-Leste
- Ms Eeva-Maria Mikkonen-Jeanneret, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland
- Mr Pungky Sumadi, Deputy Minister for Population and Labor, Indonesia
- Ms Maria Jesus Miranda, Ambassador to the United Nations and International Organizations in Switzerland, Cabo Verde
- Ms Nicola Wiebe, Social Protection Advisor, Bread for the World, representing the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors (GCSPF)
- Mr Florian Höllen, Senior Policy Officer & Member Interim Steering Committee USP2030, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany

Co-chairs:
- Ms Isabel Ortiz, Director of the Social Protection Department, ILO
- Ms Anush Bezhanyan, Manager, Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice, World Bank