



Global Social Protection Week

“Achieving SDG 1.3 and Universal Social Protection (USP2030) in the Context of the Future of Work”

Stream 1

“Achieving universal social protection, covering the uncovered and reducing inequalities”

Technical session 1.3

“Extending social protection to rural populations: Identifying and removing barriers”

Wednesday, 27 November 2019

15:45pm – 17:00pm

BACKGROUND

Social protection is key to guarantee social justice by reducing poverty and contributing to inclusive and sustainable growth, and thus to advance towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goal 1 to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. Unleashing the full potential of social protection requires universal coverage so that all individuals are guaranteed the human right to social security and receive appropriate support to meet their consumption needs, access social services, and properly manage risks and transitions over the life cycle. This contributes to fostering social cohesion, developing human capital, and enhancing productivity and standards of living.

According to estimates of the UN DESA Population Division, nearly half of the world’s population, more than three billion people, live in rural areas. In many countries, rural areas play a significant economic role. ILO data suggests that approximately 28 percent of the people in employment work in the agricultural sector, which amounts to nearly one billion people around the globe. Despite considerable progress in extending coverage at the global level, many of these workers and their families are among the 55 per cent of the global population who have no access to social protection. More than half of the global rural population lacks health coverage and the majority of people living in extreme poverty (on less than \$1.90 per day) are rural residents.

Important parts of rural populations are excluded from national social protection schemes, or subject to specific legislation often providing lower levels of protection than mainstream protection mechanisms. Even where the legislation does not explicitly exclude certain groups, for instance agricultural workers, minimum thresholds regarding the duration of employment or working hours can effectively exclude many segments of the rural population, such as temporary or seasonal workers, day labourers, or part time workers.

Further bottlenecks arise due to factors that frequently characterise employment in rural areas, such as low and fluctuating incomes, the remoteness of work and living place, or high labour mobility. Rural populations often lack sufficient contributory capacity to participate in insurance schemes. They may also not have the resources to apply for an income support scheme that requires traveling, or might be deterred by heavy administrative procedures. At the same time, governments often lack sufficient financial or human capacities and resources to actively reach out, enrol and serve adequate social protection benefits to rural populations in remote areas. Universal expansion entails improving the adequacy of benefits to account for the specific needs and vulnerabilities of rural populations across the life cycle, while ensuring appropriate and sustainable financing.



In view of the multiple challenges related to the rapid changes in the world of work, there is an even greater need for strong and responsive social protection systems that support rural populations in dealing with corresponding transitions, including those related to climate change. Investing in the rural economy and ensuring that rural populations are comprehensively and adequately protected is key to fight poverty in rural areas, as well as to ensure that agriculture and food systems sustainably respond to food security and climate change. Extension of social protection coverage to rural populations therefore requires taking strong action, including sound data collection and analysis of the diverse mechanisms allowing rural dwellers to effectively access social protection and governments to better serve their citizens. Evidence indeed shows that the combination of agricultural and social protection support creates synergies to improve the living conditions of rural poor persons.

Lessons from international experience show that innovative solutions exist, with several countries already taking successful steps towards extending social security to rural populations. Social protection systems have a remarkable capacity to adapt to new challenges, and policy innovations both in developed and developing countries can offer some lessons learned that help to stimulate such adaptations. Other countries could benefit from these experiences, as well as the unique expertise of both the FAO and the ILO to strengthen the interlinkages between work, social protection, food security and nutrition, and agriculture and rural development based on sound and tested approaches compatible with internationally approved principles and standards for the promotion of decent work in the rural economy.

This session is co-organised by the ILO Social Protection Department, the ILO Sectoral Policies Department, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

OBJECTIVES

This session will focus on the rural dimensions when making the case for universal social protection. It will specifically give an overview of existing gaps and the main barriers that hinder effective expansion in rural areas. A key objective of the session is to highlight country cases that have taken innovative steps to bridge the coverage gap in rural areas by addressing these specific constraints.

FORMAT

The session will start with a brief introduction by the FAO and the ILO on their joint paper to set the scene. The session will follow with a moderated discussion drawing from innovative country experiences from different regions. The moderator will ask two or more rounds of questions to the panel members, who will share key success factors and discuss how to adapt these innovative solutions to other country contexts. Panel members are encouraged not to use PowerPoint presentations to make the debate more lively and interactive. There will be room for Q & A, and the FAO and the ILO will make final remarks with the main highlights from the session.

MODERATOR AND PANELLISTS

Moderator: **Natalia Winder Rossi** (FAO), Senior Social Protection Specialist

- **Stella Guillén**, Directora Ejecutiva, Unidad Técnica del Gabinete Social, Paraguay
- **Wafa'a Dikah Hamzé**, Advisor, Ministry of Agriculture, Lebanon
- **Tsogtbaatar Mangalsuren**, Head of Social Protection Division, Ministry of Labour, Mongolia
- **Cecilia Mbaka**, Head of National Social Protection Secretariat, Kenya
- **Reema Nanavaty**, Head of Economic and Rural Development Activities, SEWA
- **Dagoberto Lima Godoy**, Presidente del Consejo Superior, Câmara de Indústria, Comércio e Serviços de Caxias do Sul (CIC), Brazil