

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

High-Level Conference
Social protection, a global priority and investment with high returns

Monday, 25 November 2019
From 9:45am to 11:45am

BACKGROUND

In recent years, we have witnessed a remarkable commitment to advancing the right to social protection at the national and international levels. Firmly grounded in the international rights framework since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), an important global momentum has been building up since the adoption of the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) and the inclusion of social protection as a goal in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015.

While the right to social security has been a moral imperative for more than 70 years, the narrative has changed when it comes to the economic rationale. Not too long ago, major international financial institutions insisted on structural adjustment programmes and austerity measures that cut back on social protection “expenditure” – resulting in high social costs. Today, however, it has been more and more widely recognised that investments in social protection have contributed to economic and social prosperity in many countries by stimulating economic growth and stability and alleviating the consequences of structural transformations, resulting in more equitable and cohesive societies.

Particularly in a world that is constantly in flux, but where inequality and poverty persist and populism is on the rise, universal social protection is crucial to equip individuals and societies to deal with transitions, and to ensure that a social contract that builds on solidarity and risk sharing remains intact. The question is no longer whether countries can afford universal access to comprehensive and sustainable social protection, but whether they can afford not to have it.

This session brings together governments and workers’ and employers’ representatives in order to discuss the various ways in which social protection contributes to advancing Agenda 2030, both as an end in itself and as a means to accelerate the achievement of other SDGs. It will recall successful country experiences and present the current context that offers a window of opportunity for accelerating the achievement of SDG target 1.3 and the 2030 Agenda more broadly, thereby setting the stage for the discussions on the future of social protection that we will lead in the following days.

MODERATOR: Nozipho Mbanjwa

SPEAKERS

Welcome addresses by

- **Mr Guy Ryder**, Director-General, International Labour Organization
- **Ms Amina Mohammed**, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations (video message)
- **Ms Michelle Bachelet**, High Commissioner for Human Rights

Followed by panel with

- **Mr Guy Ryder**, Director-General, International Labour Organization
- **Ms Nunzia Catalfo**, Minister of Labour and Social Policies, Italy
- **Ms Saira Ruuth**, State Secretary of Social Affairs and Health, Finland
- **Ms Boitumelo Molei**, Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour, South Africa
- **Ms Sharan Burrow**, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation
- **Mr Roberto Suárez Santos**, Secretary-General of the International Organisation of Employers