

The future of social protection

A vision and strategy paper of the thematic network on the right to social protection

(For approval at the international meeting of the NRSP – Geneva, November 2019)

Introduction

As part of its efforts to realize the ILO Decent Work Agenda, WSM and its partner organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin-America and Belgium have been implementing a **networking strategy bringing together different social movements around a shared vision on the right to social protection**. This strategy has resulted, since 2008, in the progressive development of a thematic network on the right to social protection. This thematic network organizes multi-stakeholder dynamics at national, continental and international level.

This shared vision on the right to social protection is based on the grassroots experience and hands-on expertise of the organizations part of this network. Experience and expertise they have acquired in the communities where they organize the young, the elderly, working women and men in the informal economy and in precarious employment. Together with them, they develop innovative mechanisms providing a **range of social protection services**. In this brochure we will present several of these initiatives.

With eyes and ears in the communities, and based on their innovative strategies and services to extend social protection to all, these organizations have the legitimacy to engage meaningfully in policy making processes. They join forces, within and across borders, in the thematic network to advocate national, comprehensive and largely supported social protection policies. They are aware that systemic changes are needed: current social protection policies are leaving too many people uncovered and need to be transformed, with a view to include all working women and men in the informal economy and in precarious employment and those unable to perform paid work, in their scope of application. That is a legal imperative - social protection is a human right – as well as a social imperative – we shall leave no one behind.

Over the last ten years we have witnessed quite some developments and evolutions in the field of social protection, a good occasion to revisit and update our vision paper “Social Protection, a question of social Change”. It is an opportunity to demonstrate the concrete impact of the national multi-stakeholder networks and the three regional networks in Africa, Asia and Latin-America. Combined, these networks comprise around one hundred organisations: trade unions, health insurance funds, socio-cultural organisations, cooperatives, women organisations, youth organisations, farmer organisations etc. At the same time, WSM continues its networking effort around the right to social protection in Belgium, Europe and internationally. Connecting these dynamics in this genuine multi-stakeholder network has been our contribution to the international community’s growing recognition of social protection as a key strategy for inclusive and sustainable development.

It is also an opportunity to look forward, to look at the future of social protection. How will we build, adapt and strengthen national, comprehensive and largely supported social protection policies which are gender-sensitive as well as responsive to the needs of our youth and ageing populations? Can we ensure that social protection policies build the resilience of communities in the face of climate change, attenuate the impacts of natural disasters and guarantee social rights when technological changes and increasing rates of non-standard employment rapidly transform the world of work? With new ILO labour standards in the field of social protection, greater coordination efforts at the level of the UN and social protection firmly incorporated in the Agenda 2030, one can state that social protection is at the top of the agenda.

Yet, more and sustained efforts are needed. WSM, ACV-CSC, CM-MC and the thematic network have to seize this momentum to urge governments to translate these commitments into action at the international, continental and national level. At the same time, governments and economic actors have to recognise that social movements need to be involved structurally and effectively in the process of developing, implementing and monitoring national, comprehensive and largely supported social protection policies. We stand ready to take up the challenge to ensure that everybody has a decent live.

Enjoy your reading

Bart Verstraeten

The West-African multi-stakeholder network on the right to social protection boosts the theme at the regional level

Since its creation, officially in 2014, but already informally since 2008, the network's objective has been clear: to extend social protection to the vast majority of the population who remain deprived of that right. This includes male and female workers in the informal economy (around 85% of the active population in the region¹), farmers and rural producers, unemployed or underemployed young people, etc. To achieve this objective, the network quickly realised that a conventional approach to social protection, based on a conventional labour market with conventional labour relations, is no longer sufficient. On the contrary, from the outset, it endorsed an innovative 'multi-stakeholder' approach, bringing together several stakeholders, trade unions and social actors, who represent diverse groups in society around the right to social protection.

After several years of capacity building of its members, of research on the systems in place in the countries of the subregion, of exchanges on strategies to extend social protection and of political action, the multi-stakeholder network can highlight concrete results.

A multi-stakeholder and complementary approach

Conventional social protection systems in West Africa, which were inherited from the colonial system after independence in the 1960s, often remain limited to a few services, especially for civil servants and private sector workers. And even this group's access to the system is often dependent on the employer's contribution. For the vast majority of the population, this conventional social protection doesn't work. Their only access to social protection is through social movements: mutual health organisations that provide for health insurance to guarantee access to healthcare; social economy organisations that organise producers in cooperatives, thus giving them formal status and access to social protection; trade unions that organise workers in the informal economy or the growing group of people who end up in 'non-standard forms of employment' and advocate for their right to social protection; etc.

In general, the network members (Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Senegal, Togo, Niger, Mauritania) share the assessment made by social actors, trade unions and social movements, concerning social protection in their countries. They also share the same conviction: these social actors provide major input in extending social protection, which should be recognised. Only an innovative 'multi-stakeholder' approach will make it possible to significantly increase coverage in the short term, by recognising and articulating the many existing initiatives of all social and state actors. The network relies on international labour standards, notably ILO Recommendations 202 on the social protection floor and 204 on the transition from the informal to the formal economy, to frame and build on its experiences and guide its political work.

Thematic capacity building and political action: the network's key strategies

The common and bottom-up analysis constitutes the starting point of the multi-stakeholder network. Along with the labour standards related to social protection, network members rely on a shared vision on the right to social protection² to conduct joint assessments of the situation of social

¹ World Bank Group, June 2018.

² See reference.

protection in their country and the subregion. Mutual learning based on the assessment frameworks concerning social protection through seminars or comparative studies, the exchange of innovative extension strategies, or training on policy advocacy techniques have enabled the network members to position themselves as experts in the field. The network thus becomes a reference, legitimised by its strong local presence and its real contribution to the extension of social protection.

This contribution doesn't go unnoticed. Increasingly, the network is becoming a legitimate interlocutor on the issue for many regional, continental and even international bodies. Since 2009, the network has been able to contribute to the development and promotion of the WAEMU³ Regulation on Social Mutuality, encouraging member countries to put in place policies and mechanisms for the institutionalisation of mutual health organisations. The network and several of its mutualist members are actively involved in the follow-up of WAEMU with member countries.

More recently, the network has been able to establish closer contacts with ECOWAS, the ILO and other supranational bodies involved in social protection. Political advocacy work has been developed, with the aim of contributing to more inclusive social protection policies.

A leap in coverage: not just on paper

The network efforts at the supranational level don't remain only in paper. Whether at the ILO, ECOWAS or UEMOA, these policy lines and frameworks are gradually being translated into action by governments on the ground. For the network, though not from a structural perspective, it's certainly a slow process. In Senegal, the integration of workers in the informal economy and of rural populations decided by the government relies on a system of universal health coverage based on the mutualist system. The involvement of mutual health organisations is key to the success of the system, and their contribution to the current coverage (more than 40% of the Senegalese population benefits from health insurance coverage) has been significant. In Burkina Faso, based on the network's recommendations, a new social protection policy has been developed. In addition, a new law on the health insurance scheme provides a key role for mutual health organisations, rooted in the communities and thus ensuring people's participation in the health system. In Mali, in addition to the existence of a social protection policy supported by a national strategy for more than fifteen years, the law governing the universal health insurance scheme (*Régime d'assurance maladie universelle*, RAMU) relies on mutual health organisations as managing bodies. Concerning Guinea, Togo, Benin, all countries have changed their social protection policies. Such evolutions and adaptations are still ongoing in the countries where social and trade union movements have been involved in policy development.

³ West African Economic and Monetary Union.

1. Why do we want universal social protection?

1.1. Everybody needs social protection in the course of their lives

You expect a baby, but there are no health care facilities accessible for you and you deliver the baby in dangerous circumstances. When the baby has come and you want to take care of it during the first months of its life, it is impossible. You need to go to work right away because there is no maternity benefit for you. You get sick and are unable to pay for your treatment or the bills for the doctor, medicines or hospital are so high you have to sell the very means that allow you to earn your livelihood. Like 100 million people every year, your illness pushed you into poverty. You lose your job or see your crops destroyed, and no longer have an income. You work a lifetime and do not get a pension in your old age. You have an accident at work and get no compensation for your loss of income and the treatment you need. That's what it means to live without social protection. These examples show that everyone, rich and poor, needs social protection during their life time. Unfortunately the vast majority of people are either not or only partially covered by social protection measures and have to live with permanent insecurity.

The ILO's World Social Protection Report 2017–2019 states that only 45% of the global population is effectively covered for at least one domain of social protection. 55% of the world's population – as many as 4 billion people – has no social protection at all. 16% of people are covered for only one or a few risks and events of the lifecycle. The ILO estimates show that only 29 % of the global population are covered by comprehensive social security systems that include the full range of benefits, from child and family benefits to old-age pensions. Only 2% up from the ILO's previous report in 2014. Thus the large majority – 71 %, or 5.2 billion people – are not, or only partially, protected. According to the same report and to the conclusions of the ILO committee on the application of standards (June 2019), remaining social protection deficits are closely related to lack of financing.

When looking at the life cycle, these figures become much more concrete. Only 41.1 % of mothers with new-borns receive a maternity benefit. 68 % of people above retirement age receive an old-age pension, but benefit levels are often not sufficient to pull older persons out of poverty. Only 21.8 % of unemployed workers are covered by unemployment benefits and only 35% of children worldwide enjoy effective access to social protection. ILO estimates also show that the right to health is not yet a reality in many parts of the world, especially in rural areas where 56 % of the population lack health coverage as compared to 22 % in urban areas. Furthermore, cuts in established social protection systems in many countries, in particular in the EU, have affected the adequacy of benefits and increased the risk of poverty.

Comparing different regions in the world also shows big differences in coverage.

While in Europe and the Americas a large majority of people are covered by social protection, at least partially, in Africa only 17,8% of the population receive at least one social protection cash benefit. In the Asia and Pacific region this is only 38.9 % and in the Arab states too the coverage remains extremely low. In most low and middle- income countries, effective social security coverage remains low as most social insurance schemes, where they exist, cater only to public and private sector workers with regular contracts, while other categories of workers, in non-standard forms of work or in the informal economy, are excluded from coverage. Vulnerable groups like women or youth end

up in these insecure forms of employment or with no jobs at all much more often than the average population and remain unprotected as a consequence.

But people don't settle in such a situation. History shows that they organise themselves in social organisations and movements to claim their rights and to create their own solutions. They often develop innovative strategies and from these experiences, they take on the struggle for universal social protection.

DRAFT

Zero hunger goal in Guatemala!

In an effort to put an end to child malnutrition, citizens are mobilising in the town of San Marcos to fight this scourge. They have begun to set up agricultural cooperatives to address it, generating sources of decent income, thus facilitating access to social protection for the population.

In 2017, there were nearly 6 million children affected by chronic malnutrition in Guatemala. There is, however, a glimmer of hope: forecasts for 2025 confirm a clear downward trend in this figure, which will make it possible to achieve the United Nations' sustainable development goal No. 2, 'Zero Hunger'. Nevertheless, despite these efforts, 4 million children will continue to show signs of stunted growth, resulting in decreased cognitive, immunological and reproductive capacities. This situation has a high economic and social cost that threatens the future development of Guatemala's population.

For more than a decade, Guatemalan civil society organisations have been advocating for reduced inequality when accessing food, and thus for the achievement of universal food sovereignty for all. In Guatemala, no one should starve in the 21st century anymore!

In San Marcos, in the Petén Department, the organisations involved in the PECOSOL⁴ economic and solidarity platform have undertaken citizens' capacity building, developed political advocacy and jointly prepared socio-economic projects focused on the creation of sustainable jobs. The participatory methodology helped to launch spaces for reflection, debate and the development of proposals in the community. The initiative emerges from the need for the alternative collective construction of a new economic development based on solidarity, thus reorganising the local economic fabric. The paradigm shift should make it possible to change the model based on agricultural exports into economic activities that provide decent work opportunities and accordingly enable people to feed themselves and their children.

Combating malnutrition while respecting the environment

The flagship project that has emerged from PECOSOL is called CLIMASAN (Climate and Nutritional Food Sovereignty).

Local residents actively participate in it, which gives legitimacy to its demands. The most important challenge is to reduce acute chronic malnutrition in children under 5 years of age. Currently, 32% of the San Andrés population suffers from malnutrition, resulting in 4 deaths per year. Through the generation of decent jobs and incomes for rural and indigenous families, the citizens leading this project intend to significantly decrease this percentage until it is completely wiped out. The creation of decent jobs should also facilitate access to universal social protection for these populations. Besides, it is meant to offer them an alternative to multinationals that promote the consumption of non-nutritious food products, such as soft drinks.

⁴ PECOSOL has about fifteen member organisations, including the WSM-Solidarité Mondiale partners, e.g. The General Guatemalan Workers Union (CGTG-Central General de Trabajadores de Guatemala), the Street Youth Movement (MOJOCA-Movimiento de Jóvenes por la Calle) and the Peasant Workers' Movement (MTC-Movimiento de Trabajadores/as Campesinos/as).

CLIMASAN proposes creating a strategic framework for sustainable territorial management at San Andrés municipality. Citizen participation within CLIMASAN has enabled local citizens to gather, consult and select the social priorities they wanted to convert into an advocacy message to their political decision makers. After developing their narrative, they went together to meet with the mayor, the city council, and even the national environment and agriculture ministers. They were also heard by the Environment Committee of the National Congress.

Replication of the model across the country!

These citizens opted for a strategy that showcases the two sides of the same situation to decision makers: the vulnerability of communities to chronic malnutrition, particularly that affecting children, and the vulnerability of natural ecosystems. All the information presented was based on scientific research, field data and legal frameworks, which prompted policy makers to provide swift responses aligned with their demands.

The result of the intense advocacy work by San Andrés residents has led to an integrated public policy with a budget of 500,000 euros at their disposal. These funds have made it possible to carry out various agricultural cooperative projects focusing on the production of food that is accessible to the population. In the wake of the outcomes and the success of these new cooperatives, a 'green' fund of Guatemala government has prioritised in its agenda the investment in ten production projects whose objective is also to reduce the climate and food vulnerability of the local indigenous communities. These projects will directly benefit 60,000 people, half of whom are women and 80% of whom are young people under 30. They will protect 2 million hectares of native forests, including wetlands and water sources. Besides, many endangered animal species will be saved.

With CLIMASAN, some committed citizens in San Andrés dream of a model of public policy that transcends regions and is replicated across the country. The question of the economic resources available is crucial. Indeed, the different projects require sustainable financing that needs to be met in order to put in practice the ideas that emerge in favour of greater social justice... Through this initiative, the population aims to benefit from a decent income by means of some economic activity that respects the environment, which will also allow them to benefit from a social protection scheme that can protect them from all the risks they may face over the course of their lives.

1.2. Social protection is a human right

The right to social protection has been recognized in several international conventions and declarations, most notably in the ILO constitution (1919) and in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR 1948, articles 22-25). It has been further developed in ILO convention 102 (1952) and is well integrated in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESC 1966, articles 9-13).

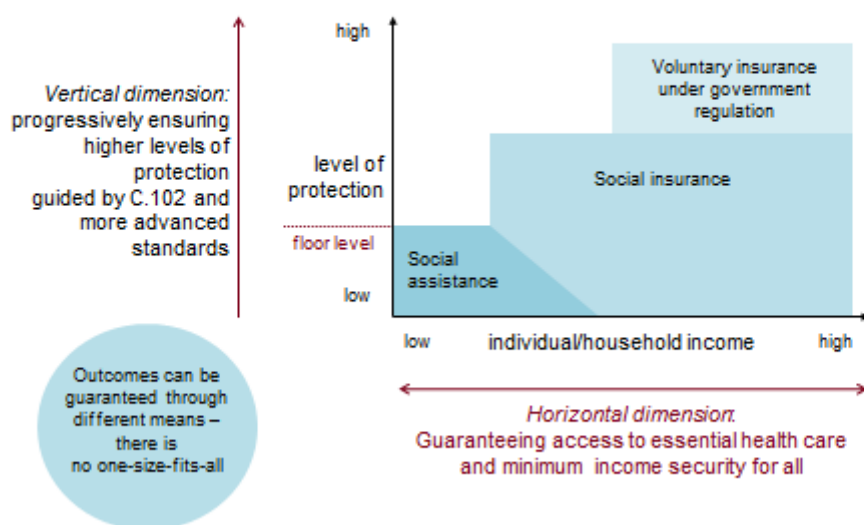
Based on these conventions and treaties, it is clear that social protection is a universal right that has to be respected, protected and guaranteed for everybody, whatever their situation or employment status without any discrimination. Hence all people are 'right holders'. Strictly targeted approaches (only providing social protection to certain groups in society) are therefore not an answer to guaranteeing the right to social protection for all.

Convention 102 (1952) of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is the key international standard concerning social security. It sets out the minimum standards for nine branches of social security: medical care, sickness, unemployment, old-age, employment injury, family, maternity, invalidity and survivor's benefits. In addition, it contains the conditions for granting the benefits.

Because of a very low ratification rate of this convention and increasing levels of informal and precarious work a lot of people remained unprotected. Therefore the ILO decided to develop a new recommendation concerning National Social Protection Floors. This so called Social Protection Floors Recommendation 202 was adopted in 2012 unanimously by the 187 ILO member states. According to ILO recommendation 202, these floors are a minimum social protection package, consisting of four basic guarantees that are defined at national level, but should at least offer to all people, over their entire life cycle, from birth to death, minimum access to essential health care and basic income security for children, elderly and for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income.

Convention 102 and Recommendation 202 are also intrinsically linked to one-another. Countries have to start with the floor, which has to be seen as the first step or as the foundation on which to build national, comprehensive and broadly supported social protection for all. Extending the social protection floor to the whole population is often called "horizontal dimension". Seeking to provide higher levels of income security and access to higher quality health care at a level that protects the standard of living of people when faced with life contingencies such as unemployment, ill health, invalidity, loss of breadwinner and old age is often called the vertical dimension. Both dimensions should be pursued in parallel, and adapted to national circumstances.

Moving towards universal social protection



1.3. Social protection is a lever for sustainable development

1.3.1. A lever for economic development

Social protection is a smart and productive economic investment. It generates wealth because it keeps purchasing power at an adequate level in difficult economic times. It functions as an economic stabiliser because it prevents crises from becoming a self-reinforcing phenomenon. Lots of economists consider social protection one of the main measures to stop a downward spiral of inflation, unemployment and less investments. Social protection guarantees an adequate level of income and purchasing power when certain risks or events occur during the life cycle like old age, illness or maternity. It is also an investment in the health and the education of people, in human capital, increasing productivity and employability, allowing investment in productive assets, raising household incomes, consumption and savings. Finally it is important to recognize the fact that social protection is one of the important strategies in the transition from the informal to the formal economy.⁵

1.3.2. A lever for social development

Social protection is also a lever for social development, for social change. Social protection can structurally change mechanisms that create and maintain social vulnerability, exclusion, poverty and inequality. It can transform and re-balance unfair power relations in society. The security offered to people by social protection helps them to escape dependency and exploitation. It strengthens and empowers vulnerable groups to organize themselves and to claim their rights.

If comprehensive and based on solidarity, social protection redistributes wealth between the young and the elderly, between the healthy and the ill, between wealthier areas and poorer (often rural) areas, between the formal and the informal economy workers. It also guarantees the inclusion of all people during their entire life cycle. That is why a policy of social protection should aim at sharing

⁵ ILO Recommendation 204 Concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy (2015).

risks between all layers of the population. It should be built on the widest possible basis, thus guaranteeing the widest possible solidarity.

Social protection is potentially a strong lever to create more equality between women and men too. It gives everyone access to an income during her/his full life cycle, also during maternity leave or other periods of care giving. Guaranteeing women an income, independent from the income of their (male) partner, strengthens their position in the family and in society at large. Besides giving birth, several other care tasks are far more often done by women than men, like the care of children or other family members and other unpaid work. A better sharing of care duties in the household is urgently needed. Social protection, the provision of good quality services and public care facilities can strongly contribute to this. Provided that the way benefits and services are designed is not strengthening the current inequality, by for example imposing conditions that push women into traditional gender roles. Women are also overrepresented in vulnerable labour situations: informal, temporary and/or unprotected work. All this makes contributing to systems of social protection more difficult for them. In order to reduce inequality between men and women, much more investment needs to be made in employment equity programs and legislation. Social protection legislation needs to credit these periods of care so they are fully taken into account when it comes to the attribution of social protection rights.

1.3.3. A lever for ecological sustainability

Climate change and environmental degradation is already having a major negative impact on the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people across the world and this impact is projected to become even bigger in the future. Apart from direct economic impact, there is also a combined environmental and health risk.⁶ Because of their geographic exposure and greater reliance on climate sensitive sectors like agriculture, low and middle income countries will be most affected, while their adaptive capacities are limited. Therefore it is important to scale up social protection and reduce household vulnerability. Comprehensive social protection that prevents impoverishment, protects peoples livelihoods and strengthens social relations, provides significant opportunities to help people adapt to climate change.

To achieve this, social protection policies and programmes need to consider climate change and environmental degradation in order to effectively address the multiple risks and vulnerabilities faced by vulnerable groups in society. Therefore it is important that social protection policy (income guarantee, transfers allowing for reconstruction and survival in case of disaster, quality social services), disaster risk reduction (enhanced preparedness, better land management, reduced exposure to hazards) and adaptation policies (reduce population's vulnerability to climate risk) are coherently aligned to one-another. This should also help to ensure programmes continue to effectively support livelihoods and protect the poor and excluded in times of climate and environmental shocks.

Support will be needed for a just transition to a low carbon economy. This 'mitigation' towards a low carbon economy may lead to factory closures, limited possibilities to harvest natural resources (f.i. forests and forestry products), or the end of fossil fuel subsidies.

Given the impact of ever more unpredictable weather on agriculture, forms of solidarity based and (partly) subsidized social insurance mechanisms could cover for income loss from environmental

⁶ Climate Change Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction and Social Protection, Mark Davies, Katy Oswald and Tom Mitchell (IDS) – OECD 2009

hazard for small scale farmers. In the most affected areas, support for relocating people from places where it becomes impossible to earn a livelihood will be necessary too.

But in the end, the loss of jobs and income due to climate or environment related reasons is not that different from the loss of jobs and income because of globalisation of production chains or technological innovations. Thus building strong social protection systems that cover for unemployment and the loss of income will be essential, in every part of the world. In addition investments and support for alternative, more resilient and climate independent livelihoods and economic activities (like renewable energy, water-harvesting schemes, etc.) are needed. These alternative economic activities could also generate new employment.

Conclusion

Because of these strong levers for every aspect of sustainable development, a social protection policy is essential to build social cohesion and social justice. Comprehensive, rights-based social protection systems prevent poverty rather than merely reducing it, thanks to extensive redistribution based on solidarity. When national, comprehensive and largely supported, they help to reinvigorate the social contract. Therefore social protection rightfully figures prominently amongst the 10 recommendations of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, as part of its human investment agenda.⁷ Strengthening social protection is an essential part of policies needed to guarantee people a just share of economic progress, respect for their rights and protection against risk in return for their continuing contribution to the economy and social life.

⁷ Work for a brighter future; Global Commission on the Future of Work; https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/future-of-work/publications/WCMS_662410/lang--en/index.htm

LA OROYA (PERU): FROM ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION TO THE RIGHT TO UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTION

In La Oroya, social organisations turn the environmental and health disaster into a national struggle to obtain social protection laws for those affected and a comprehensive recovery of the environment.⁸

For more than eight decades, in the Junin region of Peru, La Oroya citizens have been exposed to the externalities from the operations of La Oroya mineral processing plant, which has been producing gas leaks, chimney emissions, and effluents into the river. By the end of 2008, approximately 1,000 tonnes of toxics had been leaking each day in the areas surrounding the smelter complex and the Mantaro River, which feeds crops for consumption locally and in parts of Lima.

In 2005, the deterioration of health, and symptoms associated with the effects of exposure to toxic metals, including to children and pregnant mothers in the communities, became quite evident. **At that time, the University of Missouri–Saint Louis (USA) carried out independent scientific research. It confirmed the presence of blood lead among 97 per cent of children under the age of 6, that raised serious concerns.** In addition, high levels of cadmium and arsenic were also found in blood and urine. For this and other reasons relating to environmental deterioration, the city of La Oroya was declared *‘one of the ten most polluted cities in the world’*.

In view of that reality, it was indicated that the State did not have a programme focusing on environmental and human health to attend to the people exposed in these areas, who also face job insecurity in a country where 71 per cent of jobs are informal. Despite the health damage, many of the villagers were opposed to the permanent shutdown of the plant. As a consequence, social organisations, churches, grassroots organisations and those at risk or affected came together to set up the **Platform for Environmental and Human Health** (*Plataforma por la Salud Ambiental y Humana*) in order to promote, prevent and achieve the recovery of the health of people and communities exposed to pollution.

Regional Ordinance to obtain basic health care for affected people

In the Junin region, the platform’s actions led to the adoption of **Regional Ordinance No. 141-2012 GRJ/CR⁹**, which functions as a regional policy for the implementation of a programme to attend to people contaminated by metals, metalloids and other chemical substances.

The programme is innovative because – unlike in other Latin American countries – it is based on an ecosystem approach to health. It constitutes a framework that integrates and links together research on society (social, cultural, economic factors of each territory), the environment and health, based on harmony with the life of the planet as a whole.

⁸ Conrado Olivera Alcócer of the Peru Joining Hands Network (*Red Uniendo Manos Perú*) provided the information contained in this article. *Red Uniendo Manos Peru* and *CEDEPAS–Centro* (Ecumenical Center for Promotion and Social Action, *Centro ecuménico de promoción y acción social*) belong to the GRESP network (Network of Economic Solidarity of Peru, *Grupo Red de Economía Social y Solidaria*), which is part of the Junin Environmental Health Platform (*Plataforma por la Salud Ambiental y Humana de la Región Junin*). GRESP is a partner of WSM-World Solidarity.

⁹ <https://busquedas.elperuano.pe/normaslegales/declaran-de-interes-y-necesidad-publica-regional-la-atencion-ordenanza-n-141-2012-grjcr-840836-1/>

In 2016, nine regional movements¹⁰ affected by environmental pollution in oil and metallurgical mining environments joined forces and established the **National Platform of People Affected by Heavy Metals** (*Plataforma Nacional de Afectados por Metales Pesados*). This was a long road, though the different strategies developed to make the problem visible to the public, including litigation on the case, bore fruit. They managed to obtain a dialogue table between the State and the citizens called the Technical Roundtable on Environmental and Human Health (*Mesa Técnica de Salud Ambiental y Humana*).

At the national level, the coalition led to the formulation of a proposal that resulted in the **Sectoral Policy Guidelines for the Comprehensive Care of People Exposed to Heavy Metals, Metalloids and Other Chemical Substances** (*Lineamientos de Política Sectorial para la Atención Integral de las Personas Expuestas a Metales Pesados, Metaloides y Otras Sustancias Químicas*), officially published by the Ministry of Health through Ministerial Resolution 979-2018/MINSA, dated October 25, 2018.¹¹

Advocacy and monitoring continue

Although these guidelines help to create precedents, the roundtable and the national platform should continue to promote and monitor the State's compliance with agreed standards in all regions. Indeed, they aim to convert that legislation into a law that obliges regions to allocate part of their health budget to these actions.

One of the greatest threats to the achievements comes from the handover by the State of La Oroya metallurgical plant to workers. Although it is partially operational, it is estimated that the employees or new owners could not get the tools to manage it and hence generate more pollution, and do not comply with environmental agreements (it must be borne in mind that many employees don't come from La Oroya, hence their lower attachment of the city to avoid the pollution).

As in all of Latin America, Peru lacks an ambitious policy of access to universal social protection. These joint actions of various civil society movements helped to make some progress in this area. Although they remain incomplete, they have the merit of provoking a change of mentality among leaders, who finally understand that social protection is a universal right from which all populations should benefit.

¹⁰ Among others the Platform for Environmental and Human Health.

¹¹ https://gobpe-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/document/file/217486/Resoluci%C3%B3n_Ministerial_N_979-2018-MINSA.PDF

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Social protection is affordable

Social protection is feasible and affordable, in almost all developing countries.

In its 2017 working paper “*Fiscal Space for Social Protection and the SDGs: Options to Expand Social Investments in 187 Countries*”, the ILO presents multiple options that should be explored to expand fiscal space and generate resources to extend social protection and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In our opinion the most important ones are expanding social security coverage and contributory revenues, requiring employers to pay their fair share of social security contributions, re-allocating public expenditures, increasing progressive forms of taxation and eliminating illicit financial flows. This last measure could generate substantial financial resources, since according to the IMF, up to 10 % of global GDP is lost in tax havens.¹²

The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) established a social protection floor index¹³ to calculate the financing gap for the implementation of a social protection floor in 129 low and middle-income countries. In the short term 71 countries could achieve comprehensive social protection floors by allocating 2 % or less of their GDP to social protection. A further 54 countries would need less than 6 %. 12 further countries might be able to close most of their gaps investing between 6 and 10 per cent of their GDP. Only 13 countries would need to invest or reallocate more than 10 % of their GDP to guarantee basic social security to all residents and children.

These findings are being confirmed by a costing study of the Leuven Research Institute for labour and society in Leuven (HIVA) and Oxford Policy Management. They found that a social protection floor based on the average income in 3 low and middle income countries would cost between 12 and 13 % of GDP in total, including a 6% allocation for health care. The implementation of social protection thus depends much more on political will and available technical capacity than on the availability of funding. External support may never be a reason for countries to escape their responsibility to build their own, domestic financing base.

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2. The changing world of work impacts the right to social protection

The ILO launched the debate on the future of work in order to understand and to respond effectively to the forces which are currently transforming the world of work. These forces will inevitably also affect the right to social protection.

According to the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work¹⁴, there are several seismic shifts that are dramatically changing the world we live in: changes in the organization of work, growing concentrations of wealth, the digital revolution, climate change, youth bulges in some regions and ageing workforces in others. They all have the potential to drastically change our lives

¹² IMF (2018) [Piercing the Veil](#)

¹³ Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Social protection floor index (2017), <http://www.socialprotectionfloorscoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2017-Social-Protection-Index.pdf>

¹⁴ ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work , Work For a Brighter Future (2019), <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/future-of-work/brighter-future/lang--en/index.htm>

and what we think of as the world of work. In turn these changes impact the right to social protection and the way it can be guaranteed to all.

The reduction in trade and transport costs, as well as technological innovation has led to a strong growth in global trade, and to the fragmentation of production into tasks and activities, spread across the world, ultimately leading to global supply chains (GSCs). The search for ever lower production and labour costs has put downward pressure on wages and social protection all around the world.

Another key aspect of globalization is the increasing financialization of business, with a focus on financial returns over real (non-financial) investment. Business adopts more short-term and risky strategies and moves away from productive long term investments. On-going financialization also has negative effects on the distribution of income. It contributes to reductions in the labour share of income and thus increased income inequality. The benefits of work have increasingly accrued to capital income and to those at the top of the income distribution. Living wages, just taxation and comprehensive social protection systems, based on universal rights and solidarity, are key policies to reverse this trend, to guarantee everybody gets his/her fair share of economic progress.

New technological innovations, also called the digital revolution, such as Big Data, 3-D printing, artificial intelligence and robotics, are emerging at an unprecedented rate. This already has a big impact on jobs and working conditions today. The increase in new business models and non-standard forms of work is not limited to more temporary and part-time work. Many formal jobs are becoming more and more precarious, creating a grey zone between the informal and the formal economy. Employers increasingly only offer (very) short term contracts, organise on-call work, offer zero-hour contracts, etc. More and more work is being organised through digital platforms, crowd-working websites and app-mediation. This often leads to businesses denying any responsibility as an employer by pushing workers in fake self-employment arrangements. At the moment it is a major challenge for trade unions to reach out to and organise workers in the informal economy and in these non-standard arrangements, and to represent their voice in social dialogue and collective bargaining. The report of the global commission on the future of work makes clear that workers' primary concern is more security in employment and the report reaffirms the importance of labour protection, starting from the first minute of employment.

In many countries demographic changes are having a big influence too. In low and middle income countries, the proportion of the young population entering the labour market has grown, fuelling urbanization and contributing to internal and international migration. Even though some countries have established systems to guarantee social protection rights to migrant workers, in too many cases, migrant workers are left without social protection in countries of destination or even after returning back home. More bilateral agreements on the portability of social protection rights and more political will and adapted legislation, is needed to overcome this challenge.¹⁵ In high income countries, populations are ageing. While ageing reflects improvements in health and longevity, such a shift will place increasing pressure on those of working age and on social protection mechanisms because of rising demand for pensions and (health) care. This process is soon to have an impact in low and middle income countries too, while existing social protection and health care systems are weak and unprepared to tackle this challenge.

¹⁵ Global Compact on safe, orderly and regular migration, https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/195

We stated earlier that social protection can be an important lever for ecological sustainability. But we must acknowledge that part of the (past) progress that was made in the field of labour rights and social protection, has been at the expense of environmental sustainability. Nowadays, the relationship between economic development and the environment has shifted: continued environmental degradation is now likely to destroy jobs and livelihoods. Although a lot can be done to create new jobs, for instance in renewable energy, it seems imperative to structurally re-think the current production and consumption patterns of our societies. As a result, social protection systems will have to be reinforced and adapted to guarantee everybody's right to social protection, for both present and future generations.

Towards better social and labour protection for platform workers in Europe

Nathalie Diesbecq, ACV

The development of the collaborative economy and more in particular the platform economy, has expanded rapidly in Europe and worldwide. This could offer opportunities for economic development and could create job opportunities. However, in practice, many of these jobs are uncertain in nature and it is often not clear which statute these platforms have. Are they the employers of the workers delivering services through the platform? Many platforms act as if the workers are self-employed, which is far from always the case in reality.

As a consequence no taxes are being collected on the remunerated services being delivered and no social security contributions are being paid. The workers who deliver the services aren't being recognised as workers, don't have any protection against dismissals, no social security rights, no pension rights are being built and it is extremely difficult to organise the workers.

This is anything but in line with international obligations coming from international treaties and ILO standards. For the labour movement in Europe, this is both a big concern and a challenge, since Trade Unions advocate the respect of labour rights and social protection for all workers. This means workers have to be recognised as workers in the first place.

And yet, we notice some positive steps at the European level.

There is a Communication from the European Commission: "A European agenda for the collaborative economy"¹⁶ which offers some tools to better regulate and guarantee more protection for the workers concerned. First, the communication provides a clear definition of the collaborative economy:

"collaborative economy" refers to business models where activities are facilitated by collaborative platforms that create an open marketplace for the temporary usage of goods or services often provided by private individuals. The collaborative economy involves three categories of actors: (i) service providers who share assets, resources, time and/or skills; (ii) users of these; and (iii) intermediaries that connect — via an online platform — providers with users and that facilitate transactions between them.

This is important, because it proves that this the spreading collaborative and platform economy can be defined, even though it is sometimes hard to capture it in classic labour relations. The EU commission also states that, even though labour legislation is largely a national competence, that

¹⁶ A European agenda for the collaborative economy, Communication of the EU-Commission 2016, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0356&from=EN>

there is nevertheless a European minimum standard for social policy. In that sense the Commission refers to its definition of a worker, which has been deduced from EU jurisprudence. It's major characteristic being "any person who undertakes genuine and effective work for which he receives a remuneration under the direction of someone else."¹⁷

The EU Commission thus gives a clear task to its member states¹⁸:

"In order to help people make full use of their potential, increase participation in the labour market and boost competitiveness, while ensuring fair working conditions and adequate and sustainable social protection, Member States should:

- *assess the adequacy of their national employment rules considering the different needs of workers and self-employed people in the digital world as well as the innovative nature of collaborative business models;*
- *provide guidance on the applicability of their national employment rules in light of labour patterns in the collaborative economy."*

Belgium going the wrong direction

Totally in contradiction with this EU communications, the Belgian government passed a law on so called "additional jobs".¹⁹ Thereby creating three new forms of labour contracts, that are out of both the statute of worker and the statute of a self-employed. While in fact this includes forms of remunerated work, where in many cases there is a clear subordinate relationship and where genuine and effective work is being performed just as it is being done in the traditional (non-platform) economy. However, the remuneration is not considered to be a wage and doesn't contribute to social security rights. The law concerns work in associations, occasional citizen to citizen services and work through recognized digital platform.

For the work through digital platform no requirements concerning minimal regular employment and no requirements on safety at the workplace are being provided. An appeal to annul this legislation, entered by the three major Trade Unions in Belgium, is pending at the constitutional court.

(More) positive initiatives at EU level:

However, there is a good initiative taken by a member of the European Parliament that wants to provide more social protection, specifically in these situations. This "draft EU directive" underscores the importance of social protection for platform workers: *"Minimum standards for the protection of platform workers across the EU are necessary to ensure workers and employers legal certainty and to avoid a vicious race to the bottom between the platform and the traditional economy as well as between the Member States. Similarly to the EU directives on part-time work, temporary agency work as well as on fixed-term contracts, a directive on platform work could provide a framework within which a minimum level of social and legal protection could be better guaranteed for all workers."*²⁰

¹⁷ Reaffirming the free movement of workers: rights and major developments, Communication from the EU Commission, 2010, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0373&from=NL>

¹⁸ A European agenda for the collaborative economy, Communication of the EU-Commission 2016, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016DC0356&from=EN>

¹⁹ Bijkluswet: Wet van 18 juli 2018 betreffende de economische relance en de versterking van de sociale cohesie.

²⁰ Draft EU Directive on Platform Work, Juni 2018, Dr. Joachim Schuster, MEMBER OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

This proposal for a directive is very interesting. For the scope of this brochure we want to highlight more in particular 2 specific articles. First the definition of a worker and second the article on the application of the laws. The definition of a worker is broad: *‘worker’ means an employee or a self-employed person with no employees.* And the application of the laws reads as follows: *“Workers shall be subject to the labour and social laws of the Member State on whose territory their place of work is situated.*

So far this draft is nothing more than an initiative of a member of the EU parliament, but it does provide a very interesting example of how a future directive could look like. The European Labour movement could advocate its further concretisation and approval by the EU Parliament and the Commission, because it would lead to, for the European market, a genuine legal and social protection for all platform workers.

DRAFT

3. Building the Future of Social Protection By All, For All

3.1. Social protection at the heart of the debate

In this context of persisting dependency on the informal economy for large numbers of people, worsening loss of livelihood because of limited access to resources (land grabbing, pollution, environmental degradation,...) and growing precariousness in the formal economy, one could be tempted to forget about the level of income or the right to social protection. After all, some would argue: 'any job is better than no job at all'. But is it really? It is precisely in this context of growing insecurity we have to guard and guarantee the right of every person to have the necessary resources, social protection and income to lead a life in dignity. There is no excuse to lower agreed standards and norms, to discharge companies of their responsibility for the well-being of everyone they employ, to not respect labour rights or the right to social protection because technological innovations make it easier to bypass regulations and laws in individual countries. Indeed, better adapted regulation and stronger international cooperation to guarantee the respect for labour rights and to guarantee the right to social protection is needed.

For WSM and the thematic network on the right to social protection, the 'Future of Social Protection' is at the heart of the debate on the 'Future of Work' and on the future we want for the world population.

The future of social protection must also be viewed in the context of insecurity in various countries. This context leads to numerous displacements, loss of income and damage to the means of production. It is imperative and urgent that, for a better future of social protection, measures be taken to mitigate the harmful effects of this context of insecurity.

As we have seen before the biggest gaps in social protection coverage are in the informal economy and increasingly also in the 'new' business models and non-standard and precarious forms of work. Effectively blurring the lines between the formal and the informal. For women and youth the situation looks even bleaker, since they are overrepresented in informal and precarious forms of work. It is a major challenge to close this gap. Will existing formulas work? Will it be possible to expand and strengthen existing social protection systems or should low- and middle income countries 'leapfrog' existing models of social protection and establish something entirely new as some at the World Bank and the IMF claim²¹?

To take up this challenge as civil society, WSM and its partner organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin-America and Belgium have been implementing **a networking strategy bringing together different social movements around a shared vision on the right to social protection**. This strategy has resulted, since 2008, in the progressive development of a thematic network on the right to social protection.

²¹<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2018/12/world-bank-reimagining-social-protection-rutkowski.htm>

3.2. Social protection By All – For All, the building blocks for universal social protection

For the thematic network on the right to social protection, the future of social protection relies on developing **national, comprehensive and broadly supported social protection policies with the structural and effective participation of all actors in society: governments, economic actors and civil society**. They are called upon to mobilise their efforts in this joint endeavour. Together, they will have to develop, implement and monitor these social protection policies, with due respect for the specific role and expertise of each actor. This is the only way to make sure social protection is considered a common good. A set of measures and services established, safeguarded and valued by all actors in society, to the benefit of all members of society, thus contributing to social cohesion.

The thematic network has a shared vision on the right to social protection. This vision considers five key principles, or so-called building blocks, as essential to building national, comprehensive and largely supported social protection policies. At all stages, the rights of women, young people, the elderly and other vulnerable groups have to be taken into account. Simultaneously, the ecological challenges our societies face at present are to be taken in to account.

3.2.1. Rights-based

As we have seen before, social protection is in the first place a human right. The right to social protection has been recognized in several international conventions and treaties. As members of the thematic network on the right to social protection, we reaffirm these international conventions and treaties. Therefore it is important that the right to social protection is strongly anchored in national legislation, based on the norms and standards in the international conventions.

3.2.2. With the effective participation of different actors

Social protection is an individual right, but the responsibility for its realisation is collective. The development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of social protection policy require the involvement of many actors.

- **Governments** commit themselves to developing this right in several human rights treaties. Hence they are the main responsible to guarantee it to their entire population. Their roles in establishing social protection are multiple. Developing efficient measures and guarantee quality public services; acknowledge, regulate and support initiatives of social actors; give social movements the necessary space and support to fulfil their social role to the best of their ability; offer a trustworthy legal framework by developing a national policy for social protection, ratify international conventions and treaties and adopt laws on the basis thereof; collect sufficient finances and spend them for the intended social purpose; conduct a stimulating economic policy that guarantees sufficient income for the active population, while also respecting the boundaries of our planet and guarantee a just transition to a low carbon economy.
- The roles of **social movements** (trade unions, social health insurance funds, cooperatives, women and youth organisations, farmer organisations, other grassroots

movements, etc.,...) are equally important. A HIVA research²² from 2016 on the roles of civil society actors in social protection, showed that they play an important role in every stage of the policy cycle. Social movements organise, inform and empower people, especially those who are excluded and have no voice, allowing them to stand up for their rights. They develop specific social protection services for vulnerable groups within society, such as the working women and men in informal and precarious employment, from the bottom up. Based on their knowledge and expertise, they can put pressure on policy makers to ensure that existing systems are transformed and expanded so that they respond to the needs of these vulnerable groups, making sure no one is left behind. They safeguard the sustainable, fair and solidarity based character of social protection.

- **Economic actors** too have an important responsibility. According to the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work priority should be given to sustainable, long term investments that favour human development and protect our planet. This means reversing the current trend of ever more short-term and risky strategies for rapid financial gains. Business has a primary role in this, but the vision and direction of such long term investment strategies has to be defined in social dialogue and in structural dialogue with other relevant stakeholders. Sustainable enterprises put people and the planet before profits. They create productive employment opportunities, with respect for labour rights, with full access to social protection and ensuring living wages for their workers, throughout their entire production chain. This also means employers should pay their share of social contributions to ensure all their workers, in all forms of contracts, are being covered by social protection. They also have to pay their fair share of taxes²³.
This is the important role that is given to business in the framework of the Decent Work Agenda. And all companies, contractors, sub-contractors and intermediaries are required to adhere to this international standard to ensure fair competition and a level playing field.

If social protection systems have to be transformed to cover the 71% of people not or insufficiently covered today and if we want social protection to be broadly supported and to be considered something from and for all members of society, then it is all the more important to engage in social dialogue (with the social partners) and in structural dialogues with other relevant en representative social organizations. This is also one of the key principles of ILO Recommendation 202, which clearly mentions that social partners and other relevant organizations should be involved. Governments have to provide a structural and legal framework for this dialogue with the relevant and representative social organisations.

²² CIVIL SOCIETY'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO STRONG SOCIAL PROTECTION, Sarah Vaes, Jan Van Ongevalle, Bénédicte Fonteneau © 2016 HIVA KU Leuven

²³ Expert Meeting on financing social protection, ITUC, FES, WSM, 17 Sept 2018, report, <https://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-meeting-of-experts-confirms?lang=en>

The innovative strategy of the Network of Social Protection Promoters in Guinea (PPSOGUI)

Development of a National Social Protection Policy (PNPS)

Like most sub-Saharan African countries, Guinea faces a significant deficit in terms of coverage of its population by a social protection scheme. In an attempt to address this deficit and to put in place coherent strategies to improve the living conditions of the Guinean population, the government has prioritised the development of a National Social Protection Policy (PNPS) and the definition of national social protection floors in the different poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP I, II and III).

The preparation of the PNPS, which began in 2014, was participatory and enabled the Guinean social actors to become stakeholders and to make their contributions. The process coincided with the launch of the Network of Social Protection Promoters in Guinea (PPSOGUI-*Réseau des promoteurs de la protection sociale en Guinée*), which was an opportunity for this young network to share its positions.

Launch of the Network of Social Protection Promoters in Guinea (PPSOGUI) and its contribution

The PPSOGUI network is a multi-stakeholder network, composed of operators who support mutual health organisations including **DyNam, ONAM, REMUFOUD, Health Focus, Union des mutuelles de santé de Mamou, Union des mutuelles forestières, FMG, AHD**, on the one hand, and the **CNTG** (the main trade union in Guinea) on the other. The network, which was granted recognition by the national authorities in 2014, aims to contribute to the fight against social exclusion and poverty and to promote the development of social protection systems for the Guinean population.

With a view to supporting the adoption of the PNPS, drafted with the help of international and national actors in December 2015, the PPSOGUI network organised the mutual health schemes days (*Journées de la mutualité*). They provided an opportunity to lobby the government to endorse that policy. They were convoked in close collaboration with international partners, with the support of sister mutual health organisations, the subregion's national multi-stakeholder network on social protection and the West African multi-stakeholder zonal network on the right to social protection, along with the relevant ministerial departments.

The aim was to translate this national social protection policy into action plans for its effective implementation to lift the majority of the Guinean population out of precarious and vulnerable situations. To this end, social movements have asked national decision makers to ensure:

- The finalisation and adoption of the national social protection policy with the effective involvement of social movements;
- The adoption of a legal and regulatory framework governing mutual health organisations in Guinea; and
- The institutionalisation of a system of universal health coverage for all Guineans managed by mutual health organisations.

Political actions as lobbying strategies

This is why political actions have been organised to lobby the ministries involved in the follow-up of this project.

For PPSOGUI, the extension of social protection to the majority of the Guinean population is possible if decision makers take the measures proposed into account. In other words, social protection is a very relevant strategy to develop the human capital and the national economic fabric, including the improvement of the population's global health situation and living conditions.

Close attention paid by national authorities

Different factors encouraged national decision makers to listen. They are related to the technical skills in the field of social protection, to national authorities' awareness about inadequate support to the development of mutual health organisations – around 100 covering nearly 70,000 people in 2014 –, to the credibility of the partners involved in the sector, to the relevance of these organisations as a tool capable of relieving populations through their access to health care and to the results achieved by them despite the lack of adequate support from the national authorities.

The need to take mutual health organisations into account

The political actions integrated the mutual health insurance organisations, which are the only alternative systems for providing access to quality health care to populations excluded from the formal systems and which are not integrated in any regulatory mechanism. Indeed, these are clearly at the heart of the PNPS, notably the implementation of Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Decision makers are asked to set an appropriate framework for their development through specific legislative and regulatory texts by setting up mechanisms for their empowerment with a view to extending health coverage through them.

Political actions continued with insistence behind the scenes through lobbying after the December 2015 mutual health schemes days. They led to the adoption of Guinea's national social protection policy in December 2016. In addition, a draft bill aimed at governing mutual health organisations in Guinea was drawn up and introduced into the government's agenda. Next, it will be tabled in parliament for adoption.

Permanent mobilisation

During the mutual health schemes days in December 2015, the mobilisation and involvement of the technical and financial partners of the PPSOGUI network, of the stakeholders active in the development of mutual health organisations in West Africa, of those in the movements of mutual health organisations in the UEMOA area sister countries and of the national and zonal multi-stakeholder social protection networks played a major role in the adoption of this policy in Guinea.

The policy has yet to be translated into regulatory measures and into a concrete action plan. Therefore, political actions targeting national decision makers continue. The March 2018 national mutual health schemes days were an opportunity to further lobby decision makers.

3.2.3. Based on a coherent set of measures²⁴

Social protection is often seen as a combination of social security and social assistance, but in fact it encompasses four types of measures which have to be linked and articulated in an intelligent way in a comprehensive policy.

- **Preventive measures**

Measures of prevention can be contributory, tax financed or a combination of both. They are based on the principle of solidarity between members in society, enabling them to cope with certain risks and events which present themselves in the course of the life cycle. By collectively pooling their risks and resources, they can prevent (at least partly) the negative impact these risks and may have on people's lives. Such measures of collective pooling can be set up for any of the nine branches of social security, as described in ILO Convention 102.

- **Protective measures**

Protective measures are better known as measures of social assistance and are directed at the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. In general they are financed through taxes. They often take the form of services (in kind) and/or benefits (cash transfers) which are in general provided by the state or specialised organisations to people who are not able to provide for themselves.

- **Promotional measures**

Investments in people's skills and capacities by means of education and lifelong learning, providing them with access to productive resources (land, credit,...), are so-called promotional measures. They make it possible to start up income generating activities, enhance people's abilities to cope with changes in the labour market, volatile prices of agricultural produce, as well as with changes in the family situation. Cooperatives and other social economy initiatives often play a pioneering role in developing these promotional measures.

- **Transformational measures**

Transformative measures aim to bring about social change. They challenge existing policies and their underlying power structures as a crucial step towards structural and systemic change. Such measures of transformation include wide-ranging awareness campaigns to make people aware of social exclusion, inequality and vulnerability, training and capacity-building to empower people to defend their rights as well as solid advocacy work to transform existing policies. Transformative measures make sure that everybody, also those who were previously excluded, will ultimately enjoy their right to social protection. This also involves a thorough mapping of needs, an analysis of the gaps which remain to be closed and a clear definition of the policy objectives one wants to prioritise.

²⁴ Taken from S. Devereux & R. Sabates-Wheeler, "Transformative Social Protection", Working paper 232, Institute of Development Studies, October 2004, Sussex, UK, p 36.

Social security reform & the role of trade unions in Indonesia

Historically, the Social Protection system reform in Indonesia in 2002 was the result of the people's power movement of May 1998, with the amendment of Indonesia's constitution article 34 clause 2 which said that "The state shall develop a system of social security for all of the people and shall empower the inadequate and underprivileged in society in accordance with human dignity". This amendment paved the way for a new National Social Security System (SJSN) which was adopted by law on October 19, 2004. Since then, for the first time in history, the Indonesian government mandated a social security program that would cover all Indonesian citizens, including both formal and informal economy workers, the unemployed and the poor.

However, the biggest challenge in Indonesia remained to provide social security for the large informal economy, which was estimated to employ more than 65 million informal workers, out of a total of 100 million on the labour market. The law didn't regulate social security for the informal economy at that time (2009). But even with this gap in the legislation, the 'Federation of Informal sector' (FKUI) affiliated to KSBSI made a breakthrough on the coverage of social security for informal economy workers in several districts. KSBSI branches made an agreement with the district office of the social insurance body. KSBSI collects the insurance fee from its members for death and accident insurance and assures coverage for these workers. For example: in Yogyakarta for Domestic workers, in Bogor for motor-taxi drivers, in Tangerang for informal construction workers and in Riau for street vendors.

In a speech to the 100th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) on 14 June 2011, the Indonesian President outlined a range of measures to counteract the effects of the economic crisis and improve global employment by promoting social protection and opportunities for workers to take part in decision-making.²⁵ At home however, the government seemed reluctant to pass the Social Security Law mandated by the constitution. The three most representatives Trade Union Confederations (K-SBSI, KSPSI and KSPI) together with other unions mobilized millions of workers from all over the country, and organized a big number of rallies, meetings, and lobbying activities to demand implementation of the constitution. KSBSI filed a lawsuit at the Constitutional Court against the Government for violating the Constitution by postponing the implementation of Social Security. The Unions demanded to change the system into a not for profit, transparent fund, in the interest of the workers and accountable to them. A fund where investments and possible surpluses return to the workers, while being monitored by a tripartite body. Continuous pressure of the Unions in Indonesia forced the government to adopt law number 24/2011 on the Social Security Administrative Body (BPJS).

Under this law, there are 4 main changes. First, an additional program from 4 to 5 schemes, second, the government's commitment to provide universal medical care to the whole population, in which the government will pay the contribution of poor people, third, flexibility of the law to cover the informal economy and the self-employed, and fourth, simplification of the social security institution. There will be only two public independent institutions that will run the social security. These are the social security for healthcare (BPJS Healthcare), and the employment social security (BPJS Employment) which has 4 programs: occupational accident insurance, death insurance, old-age benefits and pension fund.

During this early stage of the implementation of social security reform in Indonesia, many things are still unclear. KSBSI conducts lots of training and awareness raising on the new system of Social Security for workers from various sectors throughout Indonesia. At the moment, social security is one of the most demanded rights of the workers.

²⁵ http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-jakarta/documents/publication/wcms_168985.pdf

Unions play an important role to monitor and give feedback to the social security body to improve the implementation. But they also have social dialogue with the government to discuss, improve and provide necessary regulation. Unions also negotiate the amount of contributions from workers in the tripartite



bodies. The amount of contributions below is the result of dialogue except for pension fund contributions. Unions mainly reject these because it is too small to cover life costs and the regulations obliges at least 15 years of contributions while the majority of workers are working in the informal economy or in short-term or casual employment.

- a. Occupational accident scheme, employer contribution ranges from 0,24% to 1,74%;
- b. Death benefit, employer contribution is 0.3%;
- c. Old-age benefit scheme of 5.7% (3.7% paid by the employer; and 2% by the employee)
- d. Healthcare protection scheme of 5% (4% paid by employer, 1% paid by employee)
- e. Pension scheme of 8% (4% paid by the employee and 4% by the employer)

A Presidential Decree from 2013 Concerning Health Care Benefits obliges all companies to register their employees for the BPJS healthcare program, thus including workers in small and micro companies. However, for workers in big companies and Multinationals, the quality of healthcare provided by BPJS was less than under previous arrangements. Thanks to Trade Union pressure BPJS Health adopted a rule on a Coordination of Benefits (COB) mechanism to allow workers to extent their healthcare plan beyond what BPJS Health is providing, and to add health insurance chosen by the workers themselves.

KSBSI plays an important role to extend social security to workers. For workers under short-term contracts and labour suppliers (outsourcing), they conduct awareness raising on the right to have access to social security and advocates to promote equal rights between all contracts. They also facilitate social dialogue with the bigger companies, such as those in the Pulp and Paper sector, to negotiate better quality of healthcare. This way, between 2014 to 2017, more than 22.000 workers from 9 companies have been covered by social security (occupational accident, death & old-age and pension program) and better quality of healthcare through negotiation of COB mechanism.

Unions also play an important role in the reform of social insurance for migrant workers. Since the 1st August 2017, when a specific law was adopted, more than 500.000 Indonesian migrant workers have been covered by Indonesia social insurance on the death and occupational accident insurance program.

At the moment, the government is starting discussion on unemployment insurance benefits with Trade unions. The unemployment benefit is aimed for workers affected by company layoffs while participating in vocational training assisted by the government through the Skill Development Fund scheme.

3.2.4. Financed through multiple, solidarity based, resources

Sustainable financing of national, comprehensive and broadly supported social protection policies requires resources. Lots of research demonstrates that it is economically feasible in the vast majority of countries, and that there are a range of options at governments' disposal to create fiscal space for comprehensive social protection systems²⁶. Financing social protection is, therefore, foremost a matter of political will. Universal social protection systems can best be achieved through a mix of different financing methods, mixing contributory and non-contributory schemes. There are several ways to mobilise the necessary resources, which include increasing progressive forms of taxation, tackling tax evasion and illicit financial flows and expanding social insurance coverage and contributory revenues. These are some of the key conclusions of the Global Conference on Financing Social Protection which ITUC, WSM and FES organised jointly in 2018.

In this debate, WSM and the thematic network insist on the need for solidarity-based financing and on equity, meaning that everyone contributes according to his/her possibilities and receives social protection benefits/services according to his/her needs. Whether in formal or in informal social protection systems, working women and men have always been willing to pay their share (by means of social contributions and taxes). This is also true for those working in the informal economy and in rural areas, as long as their voice is heard (democratic decision-making) and the services are adequate and appropriate. A key element determining the contributory capacity of these people is their income: governments and employers have to ensure that workers are paid living wages and the self-employed and agriculture workers can earn sufficient income to live in dignity.

We strongly believe that contributing to social protections systems is a strong lever to guarantee broad support and ownership for social protection. The fact one contributes also strengthens his or her claim to get the agreed entitlements, to demand sufficient and qualitative allowances and services. Social protection mechanisms based on social contributions have played an important role to guarantee workers' right to social protection since the first social protection mechanisms were implemented. The very mechanism of pooling resources in joint solidarity funds lays at the basis of social protection and of many social movements. Until today they continue to play a key role in ensuring the social security needs of many workers. The examples in this paper prove it is indeed possible to include informal economy workers, people in non-standard or precarious forms of employment, dependent family members or self-employed in contributory social protection systems. However we must recognize that contributory social protection mechanisms are always linked to an economic activity and a certain level and regularity of income. Therefore it is widely recognized that a combination of contributory and non-contributory elements is

²⁶

- "Fiscal Space for Social Protection and the SDGs: Options to Expand Social Investments in 187 Countries", ILO 2017

- <https://www.fes.de/publikation-social-protection-floor-index/>

- IMF (2018) Piercing the Veil; <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2018/06/inside-the-world-of-global-tax-havens-and-offshore-banking/damgaard.htm>

- Affordability of social protection in developing countries: Burundi, Indonesia and Peru, HIVA 2015

needed to build a comprehensive social security system for all, including the poorest members of society.

The smart combination of these different sources of financing is the best guarantee for sustainable financing of social protection measures in the long term. The respective shares of these different sources of financing depend on the national context and should be agreed in a structural dialogue with all representative and relevant stakeholders.

Sustainable financing also means that governments mobilise the public funding and allocate it to social protection. There can be no place for commercial or 'for profit' mechanisms. Profit-driven insurances inherently imply the risk that a part of the population with less financial means and a higher vulnerability profile will be excluded and have to resort to low standard and inadequate social assistance schemes. Such a division weakens solidarity in societies, doesn't reduce inequality and lowers the public support for comprehensive social protection for all. The commercialisation of service-delivery also entails more costs for society.

Finally, WSM and the thematic network emphasise the supportive role that the international community can and should play in supporting countries in making much needed investments in social protection. Long-term and predictable funding should be made available, while assisting states to build up their own domestic financing bases.

Mutual health organisations, beyond universal health coverage (UHC)

The fight against poverty and against social and health inequality is more needed than ever. In Belgium, for example, people with a low level of education, those who come from a migrant background or from the lowest income quintile are not as healthy as those who are highly educated or belong to the upper income quintile. In the past ten years, despite an “anti-poverty” policy, no indicator shows any major improvements, while some even record a net decline.

These inequalities are even more apparent at the global level. It is estimated that 1.3 billion people have no access to affordable quality healthcare. Low- and middle-income countries bear 90% of the global burden of disease but only account for 12% of global spending on health.²⁷

All around the world, the poorest people have the shortest life expectancy and are less healthy than the better off. Unfavourable social and material living conditions increase physiological and mental stress. This is caused by food and economic insecurity, poor housing conditions, inadequate working conditions, precariousness of employment, lack of support networks or various forms of discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin or disability.

These inequalities can be reduced by acting on the social determinants – a matter that depends on political choice and on society. Implementing policies against poverty and health inequality is the responsibility of all political leaders, across all areas and at all levels. It also requires a change of paradigm: that poverty persists, despite all plans and initiatives, points to a structural problem in society and in the world. To remedy this, we need to ensure redistribution, greater equality and show more concern for and pay more attention to all those who are (becoming) more vulnerable.

UHC, the role of mutual health organisations and beyond

According to the WHO, universal health coverage (UHC) means that all people can use the preventive, curative, palliative, rehabilitative and promotive health services they need, of sufficient quality to be effective, while also ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the user to financial hardship.

To this effect, UHC’s three interrelated objectives are:

- equity in access to health services – everyone who needs services should get them, not only those who can pay for them;
- quality – health services should be good enough to improve the health of those receiving the services;
- protection against financial risk – the cost of using services should not put people at risk of financial harm.

Mutual health organisations are acting upon these three objectives.

A mutual health organisation is a non-profit association. It operates on a risk-sharing mechanism and on the pooling of resources. Unlike private insurance, mutual health organisations do not impose any selection criteria on members based on individual risk. Any surplus from activities is kept in the organisation to improve the functioning and the services for members. This type of organisation promotes participatory decision-making and democracy. Therefore, it facilitates access to health services through solidarity mechanisms.

More than an insurance mechanism in the management of the risk of illness, mutual health organisations fulfil other missions such as sickness prevention and the promotion of health. They promote health by offering services that influence the social determinants of health. Among their promotional measures, education is a central activity aimed at improving health.

²⁷ Peters, D.H. et al. (2008); *Poverty and Access to Health Care*; pp.161–171

Their mission also focuses on social transformation through their democratic and associative management, which empowers members and involves them in decision-making. It allows them to express themselves, to defend choices and to make their voices heard. Therefore, a mutual health organisation is more than a simple insurer; it is a social movement.

At the level of society, mutual health organisations impact the relationship between healthcare providers and members who need their services. They demand access to the best health services for their members, which reinforces good governance in the health sector.

Mutualism and solidarity mechanisms are not well known and must be further promoted in order to showcase their added value as compared to private (for profit) insurance. Factual evidence in many countries shows that some peoples' discrediting of mutual health organisations is unfounded. Indeed, private healthcare service is more expensive and it cannot meet the needs or ensure quality healthcare for all.

Mutualism manages and defends the "common good" and public interest, which is defined by equality and equity, not only through access, but also through the development of its aims. Collective decisions are made for issues common to all, which results in commitments being made and obligations being fulfilled. It is the true political principle of democracy. Its role is also to combat the forces that seek to reintroduce market principles in socialised services, and to defend the social rights of the entire population.

The measures imposed today in all EU countries, such as austerity and cuts in social services, have been in force since the 1980s in many countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Under the pretext of a financial crisis, neoliberal policies have limited people's access to – often neglected – public health services for the poor in order to open the rest of the market to private insurance companies and to privatise healthcare for the wealthy.

In Belgium, as elsewhere, the commodification of social services and commercialisation of healthcare constitute a constant threat to the population. However, although we must support the development of universal protection and mutualism where they do not exist, we should also make sure to preserve them where they are under threat.

MC-CM, together with the other Belgian mutual health organisations within the CIN (national intermutualist college), represents all of the Belgian population who have social insurance, e.g. more than 10 million people. The CIN adopts positions on all the issues concerning the mutualist sector and promotes joint action, from advocacy to organic cooperation in the management of the insurers. At the European and international level, we are working with AIM (the International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies – www.aim-mutual.org) in order to promote mutual health organisations and universal access to healthcare services at the level of the European and international institutions.

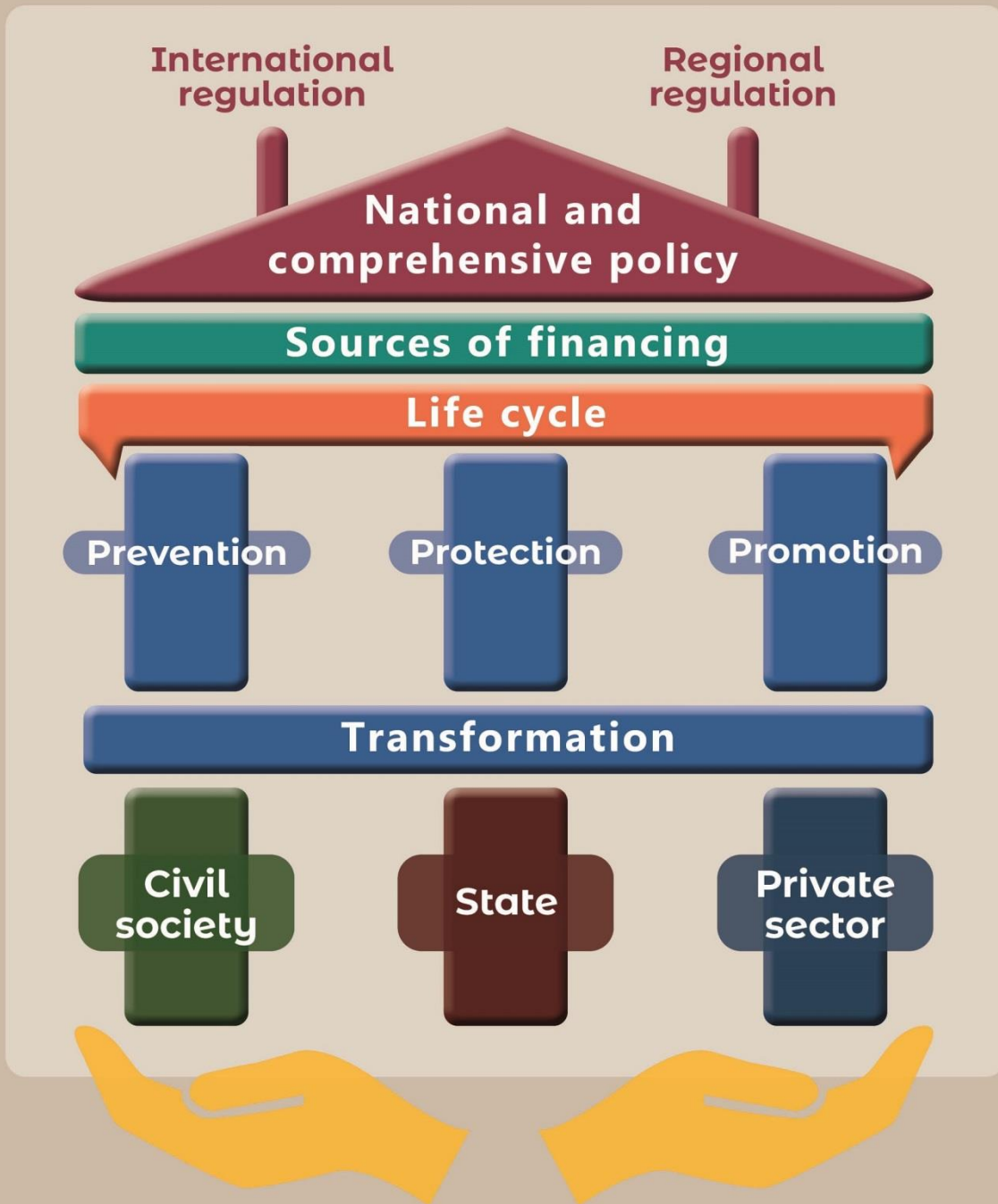
3.2.5. Based on a life cycle approach

A comprehensive social protection policy must respond to all risks and events that occur during the different stages of our life (youth, adult age and older age). Everybody, even the wealthiest, will need social protection benefits or services several times during their life. The increase in non-standard forms of work means that ever more young people spend years in a row in precarious jobs, low or non - paid internships and part time work interchanged with periods of unemployment. Contrary to popular belief this is not, for many of them, a first 'useful' step on the labour market, but an enduring period of uncertainty preventing them from building their own life. Therefore special attention has to be paid to better protection against precarious employment, sufficient and accessible offer for skills-strengthening and guaranteeing them access to social protection.

For women, periods of maternity demand specific social protection measures and protection from discrimination on the labour market. However only 41,1% of mothers with new-borns receive a maternity benefit²⁸. Extending maternity benefits to all mothers has to be combined with policies to better distribute care tasks between women and men and granting social protection credits for times in which both women and men perform care tasks. This way, the negative impact of these periods on the level of social protection benefits in later stages in the life cycle, for example pensions, can be prevented.

²⁸ World Social Protection report 2017-2019, Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, ILO 2017, https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_604882/lang--en/index.htm

Building national, comprehensive and largely supported social protection policies



The Latin America Young Christian Workers are fighting for more social protection!

The Latin America and Caribbean Young Christian Workers (YCW) organisation prioritises the right to social protection for young workers. The organisation relies on a far-reaching network present in 13 countries across the continent, with local groups composed of active campaigners. The YCW activists gather there, reflect on the society in which they operate, assess together their ability to react and eventually take action, while always keeping social progress and solidarity, via access to social protection, in mind. Focus on the actions in Peru and Guatemala.

Organised like a spider's web, with continental leadership and sub-regional commissions, the YCW nevertheless does not forget that everything starts at the grassroots level and rests on the experience of young workers. This is its real strength that gives it legitimacy among local, regional and international populations and political decision makers.

Domestic workers in action in Peru!

Similarly, in **Peru**, the YCW has been organising the struggle of domestic workers for social progress for more than 40 years. These women come from internal migration movements that push thousands of indigenous people to seek work in the country's major cities every year in order to escape the endemic poverty that plagues rural and remote areas of the country. They intend to support their families in the countryside by regularly sending them part of their salary. As they do not know how to read or write, they are vulnerable and they're not aware of their rights when faced with employers who generally try to take advantage of the situation by making them work more than 12 hours a day. They are often physically and mentally abused. They do not receive the minimum wage required by law and do not have decent health coverage, especially when they become pregnant. Yet, given their support to the country's economy, these women are entitled to recognition.

More than 40 years ago, the lack of humanity in the way these young women workers are treated prompted the YCW, through its Peruvian national section, to launch a real action plan to demand more rights for these people. The YCW has built a network of four grassroots groups, covering three major cities where the issue is most prevalent: Chiclayo, Cajamarca (in the north) and Lima. In total, more than 150 people meet in these places, where, above all, they are welcome to exchange views, but also where they decide to take action. Based on the experiences of domestic workers themselves, priorities for action are defined.

What are the specificities of the different projects? They are designed, carried out by and for these workers, hence their success, as they consider these activities useful to improve their working and living environment.

Training is regularly organised to inform workers of their rights, which they do not claim from their employer, either because they are unaware of the legal provisions or because they are afraid of being dismissed. The meetings are an opportunity for these women to develop a critical social awareness of inequalities and injustices and to launch ideas for some joint mobilisation.

Conference debates are organised in order to raise public awareness of this unfortunately 'invisible' situation due to the very nature of the work that takes place behind the closed doors of the houses. But these women also produce videos, brochures and other materials that they distribute through social networks.

Other services are available, such as childcare for their children while they are at work, or workshops to boost their self-esteem, which is put to the test by unscrupulous employers.

Political demands are at the heart of their action. They are claiming higher wages, paid holidays, an end to violence against them, and access to a universal social protection system. But in Peru, it's not that easy to make your voice heard when you're just a social movement. As the access to social dialogue was prohibited for non-union organisations, it was necessary to set up a women workers' organisation. Fifteen years ago, these volunteer women decided to launch a union – SINTTRAHOR²⁹ – to make their voices heard. And it's been a success! They are now incorporated into various forums for dialogue and consultation with the State, which considers their voices and demands legitimate.

One of their main demands was met in June 2018. The Peruvian Senate approved the ratification of ILO Convention 189. The instrument sets out decent working conditions for domestic workers, such as the right to a minimum wage, fixed working hours, social security (including in case of maternity) and membership of a trade union.

But the fight is not over. It is now necessary to ensure that the convention is properly put into practice by the State and employers, which is far from being automatic. To this end, political and media pressure must continue in order to secure that respect for these workers becomes part of everyone's moral standards.

Their struggle also focuses on the implementation by the Peruvian State of ILO Recommendation 202 on social protection floors, an instrument that provides guidance to progressively ensure higher levels of social security to as many people as possible.

Based on its experience in Peru, the IYC has developed the same process in Paraguay, and intends to start a similar project in Guatemala soon. The experience of the Peruvian women will be key to the success of the initiatives launched in neighbouring countries.

For the YCWA, it is essential to support each other and fight together with national sections, but also with trade unions and other social organisations, in order to achieve collectively more social justice.

²⁹ Domestic Workers Union (*Sindicato de trabajadoras del hogar*).

4. Multiple international initiatives

Over the last few years, multiple international initiatives have been taken to strengthen the case for Universal Social Protection.

As mentioned before, the ILO adopted its Recommendation 202 on national social protection floors in 2012. The recommendation proved to be an important catalyst to re-launch the debate on social protection and to strengthen the support for its implementation on the global level. Politically this has led to the integration of social protection in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (2015). We find references to social protection in 5 distinct SDG's (1/3/5/8/10). This universal, integrated and indivisible Agenda calls upon all the Member States of the UN to 'implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable' (SDG 1.3).

In June 2015, the ILO adopted Recommendation 204 concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy: the extension of social protection is considered a key strategy to facilitate this transition and to lift people out of informality.

With a view to supporting countries to strengthen their capacity for the implementation of national social protection floors, the ILO has launched its 'Global Flagship programme on building Social Protection Floors'. In the period 2016-2020, this programme will support 21 target countries to: (1) adopt national social protection strategies; (2) design and reform social protection schemes; and (3) improve operations of existing schemes.

In response to the multiple crises hitting the world since 2008, the call for more cooperation and coordination regarding social protection grew louder. Initiated by the G20, the UN SPIAC-B (United Nations Social Protection Inter Agency Cooperation Board) was founded as a mechanism for dialogue and exchange between the different UN agencies, regional organisations, Member States, bilateral cooperation agencies and civil society organisations that are active in the field of social protection.

Finally, in 2016 the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection was launched, an initiative of the ILO and the World Bank, with the support of several countries. More recently this initiative was formalised and it is now being promoted as "USP 2030". The objective is to generate political momentum for universal social protection, on the basis of a specific 'Call to Action'.

In short, we have seen more and broader recognition of the importance of SP for (sustainable) development, the reaffirmation of the 'human right' to social protection and stronger global coordination amongst relevant stakeholders. In many countries there has also been significant progress in the extension of social protection.

But even so, the human right to social protection is not yet a reality for a majority of the world's population. Differences in vision and in approach remain among international organisations. The work of both the IMF and the World Bank is often not coherent with the relevant ILO standards, pushing countries towards narrow safety net and targeting policies instead of advocating a rights-based approach guaranteeing adequate social protection for all across the entire life cycle. Even in

the most recent World Bank publications, seemingly supporting a form of universal social protection, these differences remain.

[separate frame]

Universal social protection, diverging visions

In its white paper: “Protecting All: Risk-Sharing for a Diverse and Diversifying World of Work”³⁰, the world bank proposes to establish a form of “assistance insurance”, with minimal benefits for “all in need”. Benefits would be gradually withdrawn as income increases. The bank considers this minimal safety net the only way to achieve universal coverage.

Financing this “assistance insurance” is supposed to come only from taxes, with a focus on consumption taxes. Even though the World bank also mentions the importance of progressive income taxes.

As such, social assistance is of course an important part of social protection, but one of the key premises of the white paper is that in order to finance this minimum safety net, governments should scale back on wide scale public social insurance schemes, with greater emphasis on privately-managed and voluntary individual savings and insurance schemes. This “ineffective” use of public revenue should be shifted to the universal assistance. For protection against unemployment the World Bank even proposes to rely almost exclusively on the use of workers private savings. This comes on top of the proposition to deregulate the labour market even further, to exempt employers from compulsory social contributions and to limit minimum wage increases. Because, thus argues the white paper, everybody will get the minimal assistance in case poverty looms around the corner, so no more universal and wide scale social insurance is needed. More ambitious social protection schemes can be limited to those workers who can afford to pay for private insurances and who can save enough. Not only would this approach come at the expense of comprehensive social protection for millions of workers, especially those earning lower wages, this approach would also discharge employers from most of their (moral) responsibility for the well-being of the workers they employ.³¹ In our opinion social protection systems need to be strengthened and extended. They need to consist of both adequate non-contributory or subsidised measures and contributory social insurance, not either one or the other. And governments, economic actors and civil society all have an important responsibility to move forward to guarantee comprehensive social protection, in line with the ILO standards.

[end frame]

In short, major challenges remain if the world is to guarantee everybody’s right to social protection and more pressure on decision makers in all parts of the world will be needed. We see a clear need to internationalize our struggle for universal social protection. The challenges are no longer local, but are similar in all parts of the world. We all need to mobilise our efforts to realise, comprehensive and largely supported social protection policies for all.

³⁰ World Bank, Protecting all, risk sharing for a diverse and diversifying world of work, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialprotectionandjobs/publication/protecting-all-risk-sharing-for-a-diverse-and-diversifying-world-of-work>

³¹ The World Bank’s new White Paper falls short on its objective of ‘protecting all’, ITUC & Development Pathways (2019), <https://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/blog/the-world-banks-new-white-paper-falls-short-on-its-objective-of-protecting-all/>

United Trade Unions in Nepal achieve new labour and social security law

Nepal has gone through a lot of changes in the past decade: a transition after the Maoist uprising and their coming into power, the 2015 devastating earthquake, a new constitution with a newly federalized structure and in 2017 three elections at local, provincial and national level. Out of these elections a stable government is expected to rule till 2022, a welcome change after 28 years where governments lasted on average little over a year. Despite much instability and the 2015 devastating earthquake, the NRSP members in Nepal, consisting of two of the three major trade unions, display exceptional unity for the South Asian region and realized several achievements.

Workers' rights in law and practice

In the process of drafting the relatively progressive new constitution after a long transition period, trade unions lobbied jointly for workers' rights to be included.

In the summer of 2017, one month after the social security bill was passed (see below), a new Labour Act was approved by Parliament. It was the result of a compromise between employers and employees: employers gained the right to hire and fire, while employees got universal social security and better labour standards in exchange.

The law has been agreed as the basic law, guaranteeing minimum wages and benefits for all employees. It covers the entire world of work. Whether it is casual work, time-bound work, task based work or regular work, there will be no discrimination in terms of wages and benefits. This also covers domestic workers.

All forms of exploitative labour practices including child and forced labour are banned and job outsourcing is made more responsible. In principle, the employer is responsible to meet all requirements and benefits.

Basic Social protection measures are payable from day one of employment, thereby also covering trainee and part time workers.

Without valid reasons and fulfilling lawful obligation, no one is to be fired from employment. In case of unlawful firing, the employer can be held accountable.

Employers are restricted to make any agreement banning persons from joining unions and union leaders are protected during retrenchment.

The law also states that the minimum wage of workers should be revised every two years. After a wage increase in 2016, a new agreement was struck between employers and workers in July 2018, setting the new minimum wage at Rs13,450 per month, an increase of 38%.

Last but not least, women workers enjoy better protection compared to the previous law.

Historic Social Security legislation and implementation

While in many places, social security is under threat, in Nepal, new historic social security measures are being implemented. In July 2017, after 18 years of lobbying by the trade unions, a universal social security bill was passed. For the very first time, all those working in the formal and the informal economy will be covered by unemployment, maternity, health, occupational accident, old age and disability benefits. Workers will contribute 11%, employers 20% and the government will ensure the management of the system.

Of course, passing legislation is an important step, but to guarantee implementation, it needs to be widely known and accepted. In an unprecedented PR move, the Nepali government took out adds in

all newspapers, covering the entire first page with this news, texts were sent to all subscribers, billboards were placed all over town to graphically show the four schemes. The 27th of November was even declared National Social Security Day, to be celebrated yearly and offering an opportunity to yearly remind the government of its now very public commitment. After only one month, already 200 companies have enrolled in this system. If everything goes as planned, the Social Security Fund (SSF) will start collecting monthly instalments from the 22nd of June 2019. As per the scheme, of the total fund collected, SSF will allocate 3.22 per cent for medical treatment, health and maternity security and 4.52 per cent for occupational accident and disability security. It will allot 0.87 per cent for dependent family security and 91.39 per cent for old age security.

Of course Nepali trade unions gathered many of their members across the country to celebrate and inform workers of these new rights, and they'll be there to help ensure the government rolls out all comprehensive social protection schemes and doesn't just stop at these four basic schemes.

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5. A Thematic Network on the Right to Social Protection

The huge group of people to be targeted and the diversity of needs involved require the mobilization of a variety of actors. Our partner organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Belgium are social movements: trade unions, mutual health organisations, cooperatives, women organisations, youth organisations, farmer organisations etc.. These social movements organize workers and have developed, based on their own experience, knowledge and expertise, specific social protection services for these workers. Some examples of these innovative strategies to extend social protection are presented in this report.

Since the organisations involved recognize ‘systemic changes’ are needed to make the right to social protection a reality for all, they have joined forces in the thematic multi-stakeholder network on the right to social protection. This network allows them to further develop and exchange their knowledge and expertise, to engage in mutual learning and capacity building and to engage in joint advocacy work.

This thematic network organizes multi-stakeholder dynamics at national, continental and international level. The role which WSM plays at these different levels varies, ranging from supporting the network (allocating technical and financial resources), to facilitating meetings and activities and providing its expertise (knowledge centre).

Networking between organisations at national level has made substantial progress since 2008. To date, various national networks (in 18 countries) are in place, driven and steered by the partner organisations of WSM, ACV-CSC and CM-MC themselves. A lead organisation is in charge of moving the process forward. These networks can always associate other civil society organisations to their dynamics with a view to reinforcing their advocacy work on the right to social protection.

Networking at the continental level has also made good progress in recent years. Since 2014, the national networks have joined their forces in a continental network in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These networks associate strategic organisations to their work in order to advance the social protection agenda at continental level.

Add pictures from the different continental networks and case on result on continental level

So far, this joint networking effort has yielded promising results both at national and continental level as shown in some of the cases presented in this paper. This explains the willingness of the organisations involved to take this joint endeavour one step further: **to join their forces at the global level** with a view to ‘internationalizing’ their common struggle for the right to social protection. In that sense, the network is the expression of their commitment to be a credible and legitimate civil society actor to transform existing social protection policies.

This thematic network will also continue to work with other civil society organisations, networks and international organisations which have relevant expertise in the field of social protection, both non-governmental ones (such as ITUC, AIM, RIPESS, the Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors, etc.) and inter-governmental ones (such as ILO, UN SPIAC-B, USP2030, etc.). It is worth noting that there is already cooperation with most of these networks and organisation to date, often at the continental and global level, with due respect for each other’s identity, legitimacy and added value. It is the explicit wish of the organisations, that are part of the network, to maintain that cooperation and strengthen it where possible. Along the same lines, the thematic network is open to extend its strategic cooperation with other civil society organisations, networks and international organisations to increase mutual learning, outreach and impact.