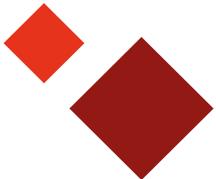


## GENERAL OUTCOMES



# The Social Protection Monitoring Initiative

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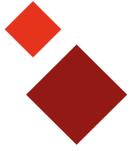
The EU, through its development cooperation policy and programs, is greatly contributing to the achievement of decent work and social protection for all. The forthcoming review of the National Indicative Programs (NIPs) - negotiated in the framework of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) - and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement can be an opportunity to further pursue the progressive realisation of the right to decent work and social protection for all and better align the EDF programs with the SDG Agenda 2030 spirit.

Through the Social Protection Monitor, developed together with SOLIDAR members, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and the African Platform for Social Protection (APSP), we have consulted our partners in the field who have told us how this can be done.



Based on the feedback received by our partners in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Kenya, Malawi, Niger, South Africa and Uganda the following general trends and key challenges have been identified.







## SOCIAL PROTECTION ON THE GLOBAL AGENDA

Social protection is high on the global agenda, as various international conventions and commitments have been adopted which define the importance of ensuring a basic level of social protection for all people, in order to promote sustainable development as well as the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights (ESCRs). A crucial framework for establishing a system of social protection in every country is set out in **recommendation 202 of the International Labor Organization (ILO)** on Social Protection Floors (2012). This recommendation has been endorsed close to unanimously by governments across the Global North and South, and aims to establish a nationally-defined set of basic social security guarantees across the life cycle, including basic income security and access to essential health care. Moreover, the adoption of the **Sustainable Development Agenda** by all 193 UN member states, commits national and international actors to take concrete measures to end global poverty by 2030, to increase inclusive growth, and ensure that all people have access to quality social services. Five out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relate to social protection, including goals on poverty, health, gender equality, decent work and inequality.

## EU COMMITMENTS TO PROMOTE SOCIAL PROTECTION

The EU is a crucial actor in the realisation of these international commitments and has, through its various policy statements, made clear the central role that social protection must play in EU development cooperation. The 2010 European Report on Development 'Social Protection for Inclusive Development – A new perspective in EU co-operation with Africa', recognises the impact that social protection can have on poverty reduction and the promotion of inclusive growth, and commits the EU to support national governments technically and financially in

implementing social protection policies. This was followed by a consultation process and in 2012 by a communication from the European Commission and Council with conclusions on Social Protection in EU Development Cooperation, which states that social protection must be placed at the centre of the dialogue on national development strategies. Finally, the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy of 2015 includes a chapter on the fostering of a comprehensive agenda to promote ESCRs, including supporting national social protection floors and higher standards of social guarantees.

## THE SOCIAL PROTECTION MONITORING INITIATIVE

The EU, through its development cooperation policy and programs, is greatly contributing to the achievement of decent work and social protection for all. The forthcoming review of the National Indicative Programs (NIPs) - negotiated in the framework of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) - and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement can be an opportunity to further pursue the progressive realisation of the right to decent work and social protection for all and better align the EDF programs with the SDG Agenda 2030 spirit.

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- Poor quality of public services, privatisation and poor working conditions for public sector workers: Despite efforts made by national governments, with the support of international donors, to invest in social infrastructures, the quality of public services remains low hampering the full enjoyment of ESCRs. More in particular, as far as education is concerned, schools are often overcrowded, under-resourced, and the wages of workers in the sector low. In the areas of health, the poor working conditions of workers lead, among others, to an important brain drain (for example in Uganda) and the high level of out-of-pockets payments constitutes an obstacle to access health care. Finally, as water and electricity provision have been privatised (e. g. in South Africa), their access is strongly limited for low income families.
- Lack of universal approach and income security: Existing social protection programs are not universal leaving a big part of the population (mainly workers in the informal economy and young people) without income security and access to essential services (e.g. through the establishment of a Universal Health Insurance System). Moreover, people living in resources rich areas (e. g. oil and gas) are often obliged to leave their properties without any compensation;
- Serious restrictions to the right of freedom of association (FoA) and peaceful assembly: Freedom of association is a precondition for the progressive realisation of ESCRs including the right to social protection. Indeed independent, democratic and representative Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are key to hold governments accountable for their human rights obligations. In the majority of countries surveyed, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are challenged also through the detention of political opponents and the scope of action of

CSOs – especially those working on corruption and natural resources – are strongly limited;

- Lack of redistribution policies and inadequacy or lack of living minimum wage legislation/implementation: In the majority of the countries surveyed the benefits derived from natural resources exploitation have not benefited, as they could, the population at large. The absence of living minimum wages increases the numbers of the working poor.

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EU

Through its development cooperation policy and programs, the EU has a great opportunity to contribute to the achievement of decent work and social protection for all and hence to the implementation of the SDG 2030 Agenda. In order to do so, SOLIDAR together with its members, the FES and the APSP call on the EU to:

#### 1. Fostering a comprehensive agenda to promote ESCRs and a human rights approach to social protection

- The EU should promote ESCRs in its policy dialogues with developing countries as a tool to ensure the progressive realisation of all human rights, including international labour standards and the full realization and enjoyment of the human right to social security for all.
- The EU should promote the ratification of international human rights instruments, including the International Covenant of Economic Social and Cultural Rights, and its Optional Protocol, and promote the transposition into national legislation of international human rights clauses and ILO core labor standards, as an instrument to promote the implementation of National Social Protection Floors (SPF), as per ILOR 202, in compliance with human rights principles of equality, universality and non-discrimination.
- The EU should promote, the setup of universal National Floors of Social Protection (as per ILO



recommendation 202), through its programming documents, namely the NIPs, and the revision of the Cotonou agreement.

- The EU should ensure the respect of human rights and international labour standards in all the sectors it may support through its development cooperation policy (e. g. infrastructural development and mining industry).

## 2. Promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining rights

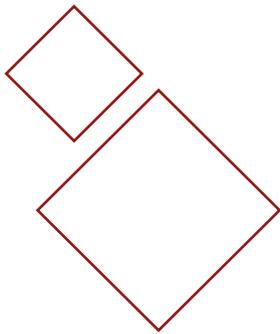
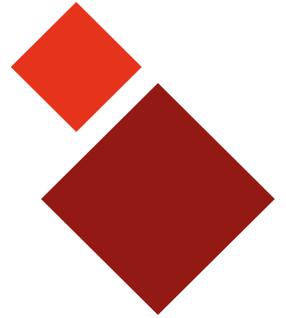
- The EU should take a more active and vocal role to fight violations and restrictions on CSOs and trade unions, in order to provide them with an enabling environment to engage in policy-formulation, programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies at national level, and to promote transparent and meaningful social dialogue with participation of CSOs.
- The EU should ensure a structured meaningful dialogue between EU institutions (both at head-quarter and field level), progressive political forces, CSOs, trade unions and all relevant stakeholders, in order to guarantee a truly consultative and participatory process to review the NIPs, and the Cotonou Agreement.



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The Social Protection Monitor is a tool developed by SOLIDAR, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the Africa Platform for Social Protection to consult partner organisations on the priorities of the 11th European Development Fund's (EDF) National Indicative Programmes (NIPs).

SOLIDAR is a European network of membership based Civil Society Organisations who gather several millions of citizens throughout Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the values of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the three main policy sectors; social affairs, lifelong learning and international cooperation.