

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS
IN EXTENDING SOCIAL SECURITY TO ALL

Civil society and the social protection floor

Wouter van Ginneken

ATD Fourth World, Geneva, Switzerland

Abstract Civil society wholeheartedly supports the concept of social protection floors and, in particular, the adoption of the ILO Recommendation concerning national floors of social protection, 2012 (No. 202). The implementation of social protection floors will be a great step forward towards the reduction of poverty and inequality as well as to the empowerment of people worldwide. The civil society movement is convinced that the rights-based approach is the most effective way to design and implement empowering and sustainable social protection floors. With regard to the human rights-based implementation of the social protection guarantees, it has four specific attention points: i) respect for the rights and dignity of people holding rights to social security; ii) full participation of civil society; iii) universal coverage at the local, national and international level; iv) and concern for vulnerable groups. Following the 101st International Labour Conference in 2012, 59 civil society organizations set up the “Coalition for a Social Protection Floor”, whose two main tasks are: to monitor and contribute to the universal implementation of social protection floors at local and national levels; and to promote the social protection floor concept in global policy-making, such as in the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

Keywords social protection, recommendation, interest group, public opinion, international organization, international

Address for correspondence: Wouter van Ginneken, 497 chemin de Chané, 01220 Divonne-les-Bains, France; Email: van.ginn@orange.fr.

The author is a member of the international Geneva team of the International Movement ATD Fourth World (<http://www.atd-fourthworld.org>). The views and opinions expressed are the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of his organization. He would like thank Jürgen Buxbaum, Janet Nelson, Piet Terhal and Yvonne Theemann for their most useful comments.

Introduction

Many civil society organizations contribute to national and global policy-making on basic social protection, and in many countries they are key providers of social protection services. In June 2012, a group of 59 national and international civil society organizations¹ presented to the International Labour Conference (ILC) a common statement on the draft text of the International Labour Organization's Recommendation concerning national floors of social protection, 2012 (No. 202). The group wholeheartedly supported the adoption of the Recommendation because its implementation would be a great step forward towards the reduction of poverty and inequality as well as to the empowerment of people worldwide. They also considered it a timely response to the fact that millions of people living on our planet are excluded from the benefits of globalization, and are often penalized through the implementation of austerity measures.

The common statement also included a variety of suggested changes² to the draft text available at that time. These suggestions had been discussed in advance with some governments as well as with the representatives of employers' and workers' organizations, all of whom are statutory members of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The three main concerns were that the future Recommendation would respect all human rights principles, would allow full participation of civil society, and would ensure truly universal coverage at the national and international level. The two main tasks of the newly-established Civil Society Coalition for a Social Protection Floor are: to monitor and contribute to the universal implementation of social protection floors at local and national levels; and to promote the social protection floor concept in global policy-making, such as in the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

This article will first briefly review the origins of the social protection floor concept and delineate the two main components of social protection, i.e. social (income) security and social services. This will lay the foundation for discussing the human rights-based approach to social protection, which the civil society movement considers the most effective way for designing and implementing

1. The group consisted of 34 NGOs from the South, 13 from the North, and 12 global NGOs (generally with headquarters in the North). The group grew out of a meeting organized by the Geneva Office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in March 2012, entitled: "The ILO's Social Protection Floor – Lobbying for a strong Recommendation". At that meeting the International Movement ATD Fourth World was asked to formulate and coordinate comments on the amendments, and to present them to the International Labour Conference in June 2012. The other NGOs that attended the Conference were: the European Disability Forum, HelpAge International and the International Council for Social Welfare.

2. Following the rules of procedure of the ILC, the submission of amendments to a draft under debate or negotiation is restricted to ILC delegates. Although NGOs may lobby organizations and governments represented by ILC delegates, they cannot formally submit amendments, but can propose changes.

empowering and sustainable social protection floors. Following a discussion of the related roles of civil society and the Coalition for a Social Protection Floor specifically, the article offers concluding remarks.

The social protection floor: Origins and concepts

The concept of a social protection floor (SPF) was born in a context of the increasing globalization of economic, social, cultural and political relations, and of the economic crisis which unfolded in 2008, which revealed serious failings in the current pattern of globalization. The current pattern of globalization has resulted in greater inequalities both within and between countries. In general, extreme poverty has been reduced, but there are still 1.2 billion people who experience the hardship of living on less than the equivalent of \$1.25 per person per day (United Nations, 2013).

Origins of the social protection floor concept

The ILO has been at the forefront of the development of the social protection floor concept (Deacon, 2013). Following the outcomes of the 1995 Social Summit in Copenhagen, van Ginneken (2000) defined the social floor broadly, i.e. in terms of basic guarantees, not only with regard to social security but also to basic social services, such as education and health. In his view, the establishment of a global social floor would be the result of a new global social contract between governments, civil society and the private sector. Some of the basic principles for the contract can be found in the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.³

The next and decisive step for the ILO was the report by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. This Commission proposed the establishment of a global socio-economic floor (ILC, 2004; World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, 2004) to achieve a fair globalization that creates opportunities for all. It defined the floor in terms of the ILO core concerns, which are employment and social protection as well as social dialogue and fundamental rights at work (van Ginneken, 2009).

In 2009, the United Nations Chief Executives Board (UNCEB) accepted the idea of a social protection floor as one of its nine core crisis response policy priorities. It defined social protection broadly in terms of income security and access to health and other social services. Under the UNCEB umbrella, a more formal inter-agency collaboration emerged under the leadership of the ILO and the World Health Organization (WHO), which was built on the “Coalition for a

3. See <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>>.

Global Social Protection Floor” founded in 2007 and which included all major UN agencies. Deacon (2013) suggests that two coordinating mechanisms grew out of this collaboration: i) first, the UN Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPF-I) which, through its Advisory Board, produced the Bachelet Report (Bachelet, 2011); and, later ii) the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B). This Board includes not only agencies from the UN family, but UN-related agencies, such as the International Social Security Association (ISSA), World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organization. In addition, some major international NGOs, such as the International Council on Social Welfare, HelpAge International and Save the Children, take an active role in the Board.

The final important step for the time being is the ILO Recommendation concerning national floors of social protection, 2012 (No. 202) (ILC, 2012; ILO, 2012), which was adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2012. The Recommendation aims at supporting Members in building and maintaining comprehensive social security systems on the basis of a two-dimensional approach: 1) (“horizontal”) establishing floors of basic social security guarantees to provide protection to all in need as soon as possible; 2) (“vertical”) extending the scope and levels of social security coverage as guided by the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) and other existing (ILO) standards to as many people (workers) as possible and as soon as possible. It is relevant to note here that the “new consensus” on social security reached at the International Labour Conference in 2001 was based on the agreement that “highest priority should go to policies and initiatives to extend social security to those who have none” (ILO, 2001, p. v).

Recommendation No. 202 defines that national social protection floors should include at least the following four basic social security guarantees: i) access to essential health care, including maternity care, that meet the criteria of availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality; as well as ii) income security for children, iii) for persons in active age who are unable to earn sufficient income and iv) for older persons. It also stipulates two major accountability procedures that strengthen the rights-based dimension, i.e. that these guarantees should be established by law and that everyone should have access to impartial, transparent, simple, rapid, accessible and inexpensive complaint procedures. Finally, the Recommendation adopts an open approach as to how these guarantees should be provided. It recommends that different approaches to benefits and schemes can be envisaged, including universal benefit schemes, social insurance and social assistance schemes, negative income tax, as well as public employment and employment support schemes. Such a social protection floor is economically affordable and can be introduced, completed or maintained everywhere, in accordance with national circumstances.

Social (income) security and social services

In examining the origins of the social protection floor concept it is important to make a distinction between the concept of social security – often perceived narrowly as being mainly concerned with income transfers – and the concept of social services (see Table 1).

The aims of social protection policies and of social policies in general are to guarantee that people have at least a minimally accepted standard of living and also to help prepare them for a constructive role in economic, social and political life. It therefore guarantees basic security and builds up basic capabilities through improved access to a variety of social services, such as health care, education, housing and food provision. Social protection mechanisms providing direct income security consist of both tax-financed social assistance and family benefits that focus on people in need, as well as of social insurance schemes that mitigate and relieve the income shortfalls caused by a variety of social risks. The provision of income security through social protection is intimately linked not only with

Table 1. Social protection: Social (income) security and social services

Social risks and basic capabilities	Social (income) security	Social services
Mitigating/relieving income shortfalls		
Strengthening employment capacity and social cohesion		
Un(der)employment	Unemployment benefits; employment guarantee; cash and food for work	Labour market and training policies
Sickness and disability	Contribution- and tax-financed pensions	Safety and health at work; labour market (re)integration
Old age and survivors		Care, homes and institutions
Family cohesion	Maternity, child and family benefits	Child care, family support.
Social assistance	Tax-financed benefits	Social work
Guaranteeing basic security and building up basic capabilities		
Health	Fee waivers; social health insurance; conditional cash transfers	Health policy; national health service
Education	Fee waivers; conditional cash transfers	Education policies, including school meals
Housing	Rent and energy subsidies	Social housing
Food provision	Food stamps; consumer subsidies	Food aid

Source: Adapted from van Ginneken (2012).

labour market policies, but also with the provision of a large variety of social services, such as child care, homes and social work, as well as with health care, education, social housing and food aid.

The human rights approach

The civil society movement is convinced that the rights-based approach is the most effective way to design and implement empowering and sustainable social protection floors. In this way their implementation will not depend on the political situation of the day, but be based on firm long-term principles, such as equality, non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability. As noted in the previous section, Recommendation No. 202 includes a number of important aspects of the human rights approach, for example that social security guarantees should be established by law and that everyone should have access to effective complaint procedures. In this section we would like to give a more systematic account of the human rights approach to social protection floors, and point out the areas where civil society agrees with the formulation of Recommendation No. 202, and where it would like to go further.

Social protection and human rights

There is a strong and symbiotic relationship between human rights conventions and social protection. Depending on their level of economic and social development, the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), for example, allows countries the “progressive realisation” of the rights conferred by the Covenant. However, every State Party (the main duty-bearer) to the Covenant has a basic obligation to ensure a minimum level of enjoyment of every right. According to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) – the supervisory body of the Covenant –, the minimum core content of each right constitutes a floor below which conditions should not be permitted to fall in any State Party. Under Article 9 of the Covenant, States are legally obliged to progressively ensure the right to social security to all individuals within their territories, providing specific protection for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. General Comment No. 19 on the right to social security by the CESCR (2008) spells out the key features of this right and the content of States’ obligations.

Social protection programmes and the adoption of national SPFs can assist states in fulfilling their obligations under international human rights law, such as with regard to the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing, housing and the right to social security (see also Table 1). They may also facilitate the realization of many other rights, such as the right to education and

the right to the highest attainable standard of health, as well as the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs. These legally-binding obligations refer to the final outcome as well as to the process that is used. The four main human rights principles that guide the process of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating social protection programmes are: equality and non-discrimination; participation; transparency and access to information; and accountability (Sepúlveda and Nyst, 2012).

Operationalizing the right to social security

To make human rights policies operational, it is necessary to define indicators that can measure the realization of human rights, such as through measures of social protection coverage. Essentially, what distinguishes a human rights indicator from a standard disaggregated indicator of socio-economic progress is less its substance than a) its explicit derivation from a human rights norm, and b) the purpose to which it is put, namely human rights monitoring with a view to holding duty-bearers to account.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has started to develop a framework of human rights indicators (OHCHR, 2012). The first task is to translate the narrative of the normative content of human rights (based on related provisions of international human rights instruments and general comments by treaty bodies) into a small number of characteristic attributes. Moreover, there is a need for a conceptual framework, which explains – for each characteristic attribute – the impact of the various input indicators on the eventual outcome – the enjoyment of human rights. “Structural” indicators measure the commitment of the State (the main duty bearer) towards realizing human rights; for instance through ratification of international instruments and inclusion in national legislation, as well as through the adoption of national policies and a corresponding time frame. “Process” indicators measure the efforts and resources that the duty bearer uses to achieve the enjoyment of human rights, which is measured by “outcome” indicators.

The four characteristic attributes selected by the OHCHR for the right to social security (Table 2) are: “income security for workers”, “affordable access to health services”, “support for families, children and dependant adults” and “social assistance schemes”. They broadly correspond to the four basic social security guarantees defined in Recommendation No. 202. Table 2 gives an illustrative list of indicators for the right to social security. The characteristic attributes in this table have universal application. Structural indicators have a universal aspect, because they are generally part of national and international legislation. However, the way the right to social security is included in that legislation will be particular to the country concerned. The process indicators also

Table 2. *List of illustrative indicators on the right to social security*

	Income security for workers	Affordable access to health services, including health insurance (HI)	Support for families, children and dependant adults (in cash and in kind)	Social assistance (SA) schemes
Structural	Date of entry into force and coverage of the right to social security in the Constitution, other forms of superior law and domestic laws Time frame and coverage of policy or strategy for universal implementation of the right to social security			
Process	Proportion of received complaints on the right to social security investigated, adjudicated and acted upon by the government			
	Number of workers registered	Persons contributing to HI	Public expenditure on support measures	Density of offices providing SA
	Benefits requested and provided	Incidence of co-payments	Percentage of support in household income	SA requests reviewed and met
Outcome	Benefits received	Coverage by HI schemes	Percentage of families receiving support	Population in need situations
	Proportion of individuals below national poverty line before and after social transfers			
		Affordable access to health care		Receiving specific SA support

have a universal aspect, but much depends on the level of economic and social development, as to which inputs and what level of resources are needed to achieve universal coverage and as regards the level of benefits to be provided. Finally, the outcome indicators are generally country-specific. The definition of the national poverty line, for example, depends on the level of the country's economic development and its social priorities.

Special attention points for civil society

As noted above, the common statement presented by 59 NGOs to the 101st ILC in June 2012 included a variety of proposed changes. Some of these can be traced back to various informal comments from Magdalena Sepúlveda, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. They reflect special attention points for civil society with regard to social protection floors. A number of the proposed changes were supported by the representatives of workers' organizations, who then included or merged them with formal amendments that they submitted themselves. They then tried to obtain support from the other two groups of ILO statutory members: the representatives of employers' organizations and governments.

Respect for the rights and dignity of social security rights holders. This proposed change was based on research by the Institute of Social Policy, Oxford University, England, and reported in Walker, Chase and Lødemel (2012). Whereas treating beneficiaries with respect is a fundamental human rights principle, this research shows that the acknowledgment of the dignity of every beneficiary helps to overcome feelings of shame, powerlessness and lack of agency. The proposed change to the text used the term “beneficiary”, but this appeared to conjure up ideas of “charity” and “recipients of gifts”, rather than exercisers of rights and rights holders. It is because of these concerns that the eventually adopted text of the Recommendation uses the wordy phrase “people covered by the social security guarantees”.

Full participation by civil society. There is a large variety of groups, such as the elderly, people with disabilities and people living with HIV/AIDS, who can – and want to – participate in the implementation of social protection floors. For the Recommendation to be properly implemented, all forces in society need to participate. In this participatory process social partners and civil society organizations need to work hand in hand. The NGO group proposed a number of changes to stress the importance of the participation of all beneficiaries (right holders) – and organizations that represent them – in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection floor programmes.

This turned out to be a delicate issue for the ILO, being a tripartite organization. Various governments, in particular from Latin America and Africa, accepted the idea of greater participation by civil society. In Africa for example, where social insurance coverage does not exceed 5 to 10 per cent of the working population, many governments work with a tripartite-Plus (i.e. including civil society) formula. However, workers' and employers' organizations – who could also be considered part of civil society – were not prepared to give NGOs more than consultative status.

Historical research shows that in many countries the extension of social security to all has been the result of actions by both trade unions and other civil society groups. For example, social health insurance coverage in the Republic of Korea between 1977 and 1989 was first extended to employees of large corporations with more than 500 workers; after that to government employees and teachers; and subsequently to industrial workers in progressively smaller workplaces. The extension to self-employed workers, and in particular to farmers, was eventually achieved through a coalition between farmers' organizations and progressive civil society groups (Kwon, 2002). Civil organizations, such as the Citizen's Coalition for Economic Justice and the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, sought active political involvement, because – rather than being representatives of passive beneficiaries of policies – they saw extension as a key issue for the well-being of Korean society as a whole (Jeong and Niki, 2012).

Universal coverage at the national and international level. The rights-based approach requires that all inhabitants of our planet can benefit from social protection floors to the greatest extent possible. Various human rights texts, and in particular the recent General Comment No. 19 on the right to social security (CESCR, 2008), recommend that “all persons should be covered by a social security system, especially individuals belonging to the most disadvantaged and marginalized groups, without discrimination”. Therefore, whatever the legal situation of families and their members, everyone must be able to benefit from minimum social support, including decent health care coverage. The NGO group therefore proposed that Paragraph 6 of the Recommendation should cover all “individuals within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction”. The finally adopted text says that “Subject to their existing international obligations” (the NGO group agrees with this, but this is still relatively weak). Member countries should cover “at least all residents and children [so far so good], as defined in national laws and regulations”. It is this last addition that calls universal coverage into question.

There are many problems with this coverage issue. At the international level, there are large groups of stateless people, and there is a serious problem with

irregular migrants and their families (about 50 to 100 million people in the world). At the national level, many people have not been registered at birth, and could therefore be excluded from the social security guarantees. Moreover, many vulnerable people, including in high-income countries, have no fixed home and are therefore not registered with local government. As a result, they are often excluded from social services and benefits.

Rights of children, women and persons with disabilities. In the preamble of the Recommendation, mainly ILO instruments and declarations are mentioned. The only human rights instruments mentioned are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁴ and the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The NGO group proposed to mention in addition a variety of human rights instruments, such as the Conventions related to children; to women and gender equality; and to persons with disabilities, all of whom have specific articles on social protection. Mentioning these UN human rights texts would ensure that UN agencies work together and that social protection (floor) activities are well coordinated across the UN family. In addition, and in keeping with the spirit of these texts, it also proposed to strengthen the gender dimension of social protection floors under Paragraph 5(c). The NGO group therefore proposed that it was vital to provide basic income security also to people – many of whom are women – with the “responsibility for the care of those unable to care for themselves”. None of these proposed changes were accepted.

The role of civil society

With the global consensus on the ILO Recommendation now in place, the time has come for civil society – in alliance with the trade union movement – to make sure that the social security guarantees are implemented and monitored at local, national and international levels. In the wake of the ILC in 2012, the group of 59 NGOs decided to set up the “Coalition for a Social Protection Floor”, and – with the help of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung – it has written and agreed on its terms of reference (see below). With the current discussion on the post-2015 development agenda, and as will be discussed, there are new opportunities for conferring a large role to rights-based social protection floors in shaping that agenda. Against this background, it is possible to map out the principal ways that civil society can help implement and monitor the social security guarantees as defined in Recommendation No. 202.

4. See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf>.

The Coalition for a Social Protection Floor

Many NGOs involved in the common statement and in proposing changes to be included in the amendments for the ILO Recommendation wanted to keep the momentum for future joint activities. Each NGO has its own focus, geographically and/or with regards to content. What they all have in common is the wish to implement social protection floors based on human rights for all people in all parts of the world. They therefore agreed to form a joint *Coalition for a Social Protection Floor*, which has four major aims:

- to seek to influence international debates on a social protection floor and raise awareness of the ILO Recommendation, based on the common statement presented to the 101st International Labour Conference (particularly relating to the post-2015 development agenda);
- to create a platform for sharing learning experiences among civil society organizations worldwide, including contributing to the development of tools;
- to collaborate with national and regional social protection platforms and/or coalitions, where these exist, particularly those whose efforts seek to promote the implementation of SPF objectives; and
- to encourage, and participate in, inclusive coalitions aimed at promoting the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of social protection floors.

At the time of writing, the Coalition had appointed a core group of 16 NGOs (seven from the South, three from the North, and six global NGOs with headquarters in the North). They consist of organizations that focus on particular vulnerable groups, human rights organizations and trade unions. They produced their first newsletter in December 2012, and alongside a number of activities – with the support of the Geneva Office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung – the core group held its first meeting in April 2013.

The Coalition has started to identify existing national and regional networks on social protection; it has also started to work on a toolkit for civil society organizations to participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SPF programmes and projects, mainly at local and national levels; and it is considering launching a website.

Influencing the UN post-2015 development agenda

The report to the UN Secretary-General on “Realizing the future we want for all” (UN System Task Force on the post-2015 UN Development Agenda, 2012) provides a broad conceptual framework within which the UN post-2015 development agenda can be shaped. This report proposes that the post-2015 agenda format remains based on concrete end goals and targets, but is reorganized along four key dimensions of a more holistic approach: 1) inclusive

social development; 2) inclusive economic development; 3) environmental sustainability; and 4) peace and security. It then adds that the UN post-2015 development agenda should be conceived as a truly global agenda with shared responsibilities for all countries. Some global governance mechanisms will need to be reformed or strengthened so as to achieve a rights-based, equitable and sustainable process of global development. It also points out that broad and inclusive consultation processes will be required to shape a shared vision for the post-2015 development agenda.

The human rights framework, consisting of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights covers a large part of this holistic approach. Within that context the recently-adopted Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights (United Nations, 2012) could provide excellent guidance for goal-setting in these five human rights areas. Within the Human Rights Council, there are now also attempts to define the right to peace and to a sustainable environment. And finally, the supervisory mechanisms developed around basic human rights treaties and the so-called Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) could be used as new governance mechanisms to monitor and ensure implementation of post-2015 development goals and targets (van Ginneken, 2011a).

Human rights-based social protection floors can be an important factor in achieving inclusive social development, in particular if they target families living in extreme poverty (Sepúlveda and De Schutter, 2013). Broad-based social protection floors, including the right to health and education, will provide vulnerable groups with capabilities to contribute to more inclusive economic development. Broad-based social protection systems (see Table 1) also have an important influence on cohesion within families, communities and nations (van Ginneken, 2011b), thereby contributing to peace and security.

The establishment of a Global Social Protection Fund (GSPF) could be the most important new mechanism for addressing growing inequities, and providing one of the pillars of better global governance (De Schutter and Sepúlveda, 2012). The GSPF would rely on low-income countries devoting their maximum available resources to rights-based social protection schemes. In support of these efforts, any shortfall between this amount and what is needed to fund these schemes, would be made up by the GSPF, via donations from middle- and high-income countries. The GSPF would also provide reinsurance in that it would help underwrite these schemes against the risks of excess demand triggered by major shocks.

On all these issues for debate in the post-2015 development agenda, including the adoption of social protection floors as a new development goal and the establishment of the GSPF, civil society organizations (and the International Social Security Association for that matter) should seek to influence the outcomes. In the first instance, they should try to influence governments who decide on the post-2015 agenda, and in particular low-income and donor countries. The Coalition has

therefore formulated a resolution on “Social protection floors, human rights and the eradication of poverty”, which could provide elements for the Ministerial Declaration to be adopted at the High-level Segment of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the beginning of July 2013, as well as for a resolution to be adopted by the UN General Assembly at the end of 2013 and by the Human Rights Council at the beginning of 2014. The Coalition will also try to influence a variety of UN family members, such as UN agencies and the World Bank, also through SPIAC-B.

*Towards the universal implementation
of the four social security guarantees*

As noted before, the social protection floor concept can extend to a variety of social services, such as education, housing, water and sanitation. It is also most likely that the new post-2015 development goals will adopt such a broad definition of social protection. However, in the immediate term, it may be advisable for the Coalition for a Social Protection Floor to focus on the implementation of the four social security guarantees, as defined in Recommendation No. 202.

First, national NGOs and trade unions, and civil society at large, can build pressure groups to monitor the extent to which the four social security guarantees prioritized by the Recommendation are implemented in their country. They can establish whether all children, adults in active age groups and people in old age enjoy a minimum decent level of income security that ensures access to essential goods and services and whether everyone has access to a minimum level of health care. They may also be able to document gaps and even calculate the cost of closing these gaps, and can indicate where resources can be found. That diagnostic work can then be used to galvanize governments into action (Cichon, 2013). This should be done with the participation of those who are directly concerned, such as the elderly, the poor and people with disabilities.

Second, it is important to document and disseminate good (and bad) practices. International organizations, such as ILO and UNICEF, have already done so to a large extent, but NGOs can contribute to this process. This may then also lead to the development of tools, and possibly a manual. The Coalition for a Social Protection Floor has by and large done just that through its first newsletter, and will continue to do so in subsequent issues. But these examples need to be analysed, so that specific points of success and failure can be identified. In this connection, it is also important to give consideration to how the website of the coalition will be organized, and how it will contribute to other websites, such as those of the ILO, UNICEF, ISSA and SPIAC-B.

Third, national and regional NGOs can initiate programmes and link up with existing programmes, such as those undertaken by nation states, possibly in collaboration with international organizations. In that connection, it may also start

(or contribute to) pilot programmes that teach individuals and families how they can claim their rights. Certain NGOs within the Coalition have very specific knowledge on the implementation and administration of programmes on the four social security guarantees. HelpAge International, for example, has a great deal of experience in the design and administration of social pensions. The European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) has formulated a number of interesting European Union social security proposals, such as on a Framework Directive on Minimum Income (van Lancker, 2010).

Finally, there is a large job to be done on advocacy among civil society organizations (including workers' organizations) as well as directed towards social security organizations, states and international organizations – within countries, regionally and globally. This is essential for the present discussion on the post-2015 development agenda, but will also have to be continued afterwards.

The way forward

The 59 signatory NGOs of the common statement wholeheartedly support the adoption of the ILO Recommendation concerning national floors of social protection, because its implementation will be a great step forward towards the reduction of poverty and inequality as well as to the empowerment of people worldwide. The civil society movement is convinced that the rights-based approach is the most effective way to design and implement empowering and sustainable social protection floors. With regard to the human rights-based implementation of the social security guarantees, it has four specific attention points: i) respect for the rights and dignity of people holding rights to social security; ii) full participation of civil society; iii) universal coverage at the local, national and international level; iv) and concern for vulnerable groups, such as elderly people and people with disabilities; persons living under precarious legal conditions, such as ethnic minorities, migrants and stateless persons; and for children and women in general.

Civil society organizations usually have huge mandates and very limited resources. They tend to concentrate on national issues, and spend little time and resources on international coordination. They have to strike a balance between their long-term interests and capacities and their capability to respond in the short term to changing circumstances and priorities. Continuously, they have to assess the impact of their work, and to see whether their activities produce maximum value added and impact in comparison with their efforts and resources. So, what can be expected from the Coalition on a Social Protection Floor? And what resources are needed to obtain the expected outcome?

The Coalition will first have to make a number of general choices with regard to the type of activities it would like undertake and focus on, and with regard to which partners it would like to work with. It has already started to

formulate its vision on the post-2015 development agenda, which should focus on rights-based social protection floors and on the eradication of poverty by 2030. At the national level, it may decide to concentrate for the next two to three years on the four social security guarantees as defined by Recommendation No. 202.

As regards preferred partners, the trade union movement is at the moment the most powerful and vociferous civil society proponent of the social security guarantees. This makes it the most logical civil society partner for the Coalition, which besides already has some trade unions in its membership. With regard to international organizations, the ILO would appear the most appropriate partner, as does the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, without whose support the Coalition would have never seen the light of day.

The expected outcomes would first and foremost have to be defined on a country by country basis. Participating NGOs will have to make a decision about the resources and efforts they are willing to earmark for working towards extending one (or all) of the social security guarantees in their country. That choice may also be dependent on whether the government and/or an international organization, such as the ILO, are already active in that country. More particularly, the Coalition and participating NGOs could, for example, target their efforts on social security agencies – including ISSA member organizations – and other social policy delivery administrations, to advocate for the “good governance” of these bodies to improve their transparency, efficiency and effectiveness, so as to help maximize administrative effectiveness and reduce inefficiencies and overlaps. Importantly, this may contribute to efforts to achieve sustainable “fiscal space” as well as encourage a more coherent design of the delivery of benefits.

Finally, the Coalition will have to establish its own way of working. The core group of 16 NGOs will have to evaluate how they can assist national NGOs to contribute to the implementation of the four social security guarantees. The core group should also be able to obtain information from national projects and disseminate this to NGOs in other countries.

Bibliography

- Bachelet, M. (coord.).** 2011. *Social protection floor for a fair and inclusive globalization* (Report of the Social Protection Floor Advisory Group). Geneva, International Labour Office.
- CESCR.** 2008. *General comment No. 19: The right to social security (Article 9)* (Thirty-ninth session of the Committee, Geneva, 5–23 November 2007). Geneva, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- Cichon, M.** 2013. “It is our turn now: Civil society, the labour movement and the stewardship of the social protection floor, in *ICSW Global Cooperation Newsletter*, January.

- De Schutter, O.; Sepúlveda, M.** 2012. *Underwriting the poor: A Global Fund for Social Protection* (Briefing note, No. 7). Geneva, United Nations Human Rights Council.
- Deacon, B.** 2013. *Global social policy in the making: The foundations of the social protection floor*. Bristol, Policy Press.
- Ginneken, W. van.** 2000. *The extension of social protection: ILO's aims for the years to come* (Conference paper, DFID-ODI Inter-Agency Seminar on Social Protection, Easthampstead Park, 22-23 March). Geneva, International Labour Office.
- Ginneken, W. van.** 2009. "Social security and the global socio-economic floor: Towards a human rights-based approach", in *Global Social Policy*, Vol. 9, No. 2.
- Ginneken, W. van.** 2011a. "Social protection, the Millennium Development Goals and human rights", in *IDS Bulletin*, Vol. 42, No. 6.
- Ginneken, W. van.** 2011b. *Sustaining European social security systems in a globalised economy*. Strasbourg, Council of Europe.
- Ginneken, W. van.** 2012. *Poverty, human rights and income security in Europe* (Conference paper, 14th BIEN Congress, Munich, 14-16 September). Munich.
- ILC.** 2004. "Constructing a social-economic floor", in *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO* (Report of the Director-General on the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, International Labour Conference, 92nd Session, June). Geneva, International Labour Office.
- ILC.** 2012. *Text of the Recommendation concerning national floors of social protection* (Provisional Record 14A, International Labour Conference, 101st Session, June). Geneva, International Labour Office.
- ILO.** 2001. *Social security: A new consensus*. Geneva, International Labour Office.
- ILO.** 2012. *The strategy of the International Labour Organization – Social security for all: Building social protection floors and comprehensive social security systems*. Geneva, International Labour Office – Social Security Department.
- Jeong, H.-S.; Niki, R.** 2012. "Divergence in the development of public health insurance in Japan and the Republic of Korea: A multiple-payer versus a single-payer system", in *International Social Security Review*, Vol. 65, No. 2.
- Kwon, S.** 2002. *Achieving health insurance for all: Lessons from the Republic of Korea* (Extension of social security paper, No. 1). International Labour Office – Social Security Policy and Development Branch.
- OHCHR.** 2012. *Human rights indicators: A guide to measurement and implementation*. Geneva, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Sepúlveda, M.; Nyst, C.** 2012. *The human rights approach to social protection*. Helsinki, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
- Sepúlveda, M.; De Schutter, O.** 2013. *The need to include a rights-based approach to social protection in the post-2015 development agenda*. Geneva, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- United Nations.** 2012. *Final draft of the guiding principles on extreme poverty and human rights, submitted by the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights*,

Magdalena Sepúlveda Carmona (Human Rights Council, 21st Session, Geneva, July).
Geneva, United Nations Human Rights Council.

United Nations. 2013. *A new global partnership: Eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development* (Report). New York, NY, United Nations – High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

UN System Task Force on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. 2012. *Realizing the future we want for all: Report to the Secretary General*. New York, NY, United Nations.

Van Lancker, A. 2010. *Working document on a Framework Directive on Minimum Income* (Working paper). Brussels, European Anti-Poverty Network.

Walker R.; Chase, E.; Lødemel, I. 2012. “The indignity of the Welfare Reform Act”, in *Poverty*, No. 143.

World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. 2004. *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*. Geneva, International Labour Office.