

CONCEPT NOTE

Global Action for Social Development amidst Converging Crises

Background

The year 2025 marks the 30th anniversary of the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development and is a decade into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These milestones represent a shared commitment for advancing social development and ensuring that no one is left behind.

Since the Copenhagen World Summit, much progress has been made across the world in realizing social development objectives such as poverty eradication, full employment and inclusion. At the same time, shortfalls remain, exacerbated by reversals in the wake of shocks and crises.

Shocks hit the most vulnerable people and societies the hardest, with both short- and long-term impacts on social development. Developing countries, particularly those in special situations such as least-developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States are among the worst affected.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the value of social protection systems, saving lives and supporting economies at large. National experiences have shown that countries that had made more progress towards the SDGs, particularly in social development, were better equipped to deal with the impact of the pandemic.

While national coping mechanisms are crucial, they remain insufficient to address the evolving risk landscape from multiple interrelated global stressors and feedback loops. The cascading effects of crises across systems highlight the need for strengthened global action to reduce systemic risks and enhance resilience. Advancing social development during recurrent and converging crises thus requires both, investment in building resilience and coping capacities at the national level, and supportive collective actions at the global level.

The United Nations system is well-placed to build consensus on how to take forward the necessary actions. The Summit of the Future in 2024, the second World Summit for Social Development and the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in 2025 can all serve to advance new international agreements on social development that update the Copenhagen Declaration for our times.

Objective

This side event, which is co-organized with the Permanent Mission of Samoa to the United Nations, will bring together high-level representatives from Member States, international organizations, academia, NGOs and civil society to discuss the impact of converging crises on social development and the way forward. The Economic Analysis and Policy Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs will present preliminary messages of the World Social Report, 2024 including evidence-based recommendations and priority actions for advancing social development amid recurrent and converging crises.

Agenda

WELCOMING REMARKS

Moderator

- **John Wilmoth**, *Officer-in-Charge*, Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD), UNDESA

OPENING REMARKS (5 min each)

- **Navid Hanif**, *Assistant-Secretary-General*, UNDESA
- **H.E. Fatumanava-o-Upolu III Dr Pa'olelei Luteru**, *Permanent Representative of Samoa to the United Nations*, Chair of AOSIS

PRESENTATION: KEY MESSAGES OF THE WORLD SOCIAL REPORT 2024 (10 min)

- **Shantanu Mukherjee**, *Director*, Economic Analysis and Policy Division (EAPD), UNDESA

High-Level Speakers (10 min each, introduced by the Moderator)

- **Sabina Alkire**, *Director*, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Institute at University of Oxford.
- **Shahrashoub Razavi**, *Director* of the Social Protection Department at the International Labour Organization.
- **Sheryl Hendricks**, *Professor* of Food Security and *Director* of the Natural Resources Institute (NRI), University of Pretoria.
- **Isabella Marras**, *Senior Programme Management*, Officer in charge of Interagency Affairs, United Nations Environment Programme.

MODERATED INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION (10 min, based on Guiding Questions)

Closing Remarks by the Moderator

Proposed Guiding Questions

- How is the risk landscape for countries and populations changing and why?
- What are some of the cumulative effects caused by the recurrence and convergence of global crises on the progress towards social development? Which populations are likely to be the worst affected?
- What actions have been successful in addressing these current challenges with a view towards fully undertaking the necessary transitions for advancing social development?
- How can developing countries enhance social protection systems, especially while they navigate the current confluence of crises?
- What are the critical international actions for advancing social development in the context of recurrent crises? How can the United Nations system support these actions?