

ACCELERATING GLOBAL ACTIONS FOR A WORLD WITHOUT POVERTY: GAPS, CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS Inter-agency Expert Group Meeting on Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)

Session 5: Expanding social protection systems to underpin poverty-reducing development and economic inclusion

Social protection for rural areas: what does it look like and what is needed¹?

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Social protection has been recognised as an essential component of poverty reduction strategies, as well as being pivotal to ensuring access to basic services, managing risk effectively and contributing to economic development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has formalised this recognition and commitment across national priorities, with social protection considered a target in itself, in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1.3, but also as a core strategy for reducing inequalities (SDG 10.4).

Governments continue to make important commitments and progress towards SDG 1.3. In addition, many low-income countries have also prioritised the allocation of national budgets to build nascent systems and expand coverage of social protection. However, designing and implementing effective social protection floors requires understanding the specific barriers of access and the needs of those currently excluded from the system. People living in rural areas continue to be left behind in terms of access to effective protection. They continue to be over-represented among poor and excluded populations, despite being the main drivers of the agricultural and food systems or custodians of natural resources and biodiversity in most developing contexts. Yes, 78% of the SDG targets require actions in and from rural areas.

This article discusses two key priorities for social protection in rural areas: on one hand (i) the importance of advocating for scaling up the coverage of social protection in rural areas, while ensuring its adequacy in terms of livelihoods, and on the other, (ii) the importance of enhancing the impact of social protection- from a protection, prevention, promotion and transformative perspective- promoting effective linkages with rural development, climate adaptation and resilience.

Priority 1: Ensuring effective coverage²

¹ This note was prepared exclusively as background material for the Inter-agency Expert Group Meeting on Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. It draws from the work of FAO across all the divisions that contribute to the Organizational outcome on social protection, and of the work across 5 regions. It also draws from existing FAO global and regional publications including: *FAO Social Protection Framework* (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7016e.pdf>), Allieu, A.M. and Ocampo, A. 2019. *On the path to universal coverage for rural populations: removing barriers of access to social protection*. Rome. (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca7246en/ca7246en.pdf>), *FAO's work on Social Protection* (<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca5779en>); FAO and Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre. 2019. *Managing climate risks through social protection – Reducing rural poverty and building resilient agricultural livelihoods*. Rome. (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca6681en/ca6681en.pdf>) and Winder Rossi, N., Spano, F., Sabates-Wheeler, R. & Kohnstamm, S. 2017. *Social Protection and Resilience. Supporting livelihoods in protracted crises, fragile and humanitarian context*. FAO Position Paper. Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Institute for Development Studies (<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7606e.pdf>); , for Small Scale Fisheries in Latin America (FAO, 2019) (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca3177en/CA3177EN.pdf>) (pages 34-38),

² Full articles and full paper can be found at: Allieu, A.M. and Ocampo, A. 2019. *On the path to universal coverage for rural populations: removing barriers of access to social protection*. Rome. (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca7246en/ca7246en.pdf>), Expanding social protection in rural areas, focusing on fisheries and forestry (Ma, Ocampo, Benammour, Dandrea)

Across regions, family farmers face strong constraints in terms of access to infrastructure, social and financial services and innovative technologies, and practices that prevent them from benefitting from important processes of rural transformation, development or urban–rural interlinkages. Their production and consumption decisions are interdependent, further increasing their risk of falling into cycles of intergenerational poverty. Enhancing their access to social protection, while enhancing their economic and productive capacity represents an essential strategy for the overall objectives of poverty reduction, rural transformation and inclusive growth. It should be an explicit priority and not an afterthought.

The effective reach of social protection programmes is not a priority only from a Rights perspective, but it is essential from a rural development and economic growth perspective. Rural poor are affected by limited access to social service, as well as impacted by market failures which hamper their ability to move out of poverty (even in contexts of economic growth). Rural poor experience:

- limited access to formal employment, financial services, markets, infrastructure, innovative technologies and practices
- Consumption and production decisions are **interdependent**, which makes them averse to risk, limits their time horizon and forces them to trade off potentially higher return but riskier livelihood strategies, for lower risk but less remunerative ones
- Instability, volatility and vulnerability of the agriculture sector (including fishers and forestry) including exposure to price changes, as well as unpredictable weather and more frequent and severe climate-related shocks.

Even for those who are better off, most farmers (fishermen/women and forest dependent communities) lack access to basic social security entitlements: decent work legislation, health insurance, pension, crop protection

FAO recognizes that a thriving agriculture sector requires innovative technological practices, vibrant markets and investment, but it also requires enhancing the capacity of family farmers to access these. For instance, effective access to social protection can address some market failures and enable the households to invest in innovative sustainable income generating opportunities. At the same time it can contribute to enhancing social capital and reciprocity networks, thereby reducing strains on (overstretched) informal risk-sharing arrangements, cementing stronger bonds between citizens and state (the “social contract”), and expanding domestic and unleashing productive potential as an engine of (more inclusive and equitable) growth. Rural people in many parts of the world have long devised ways to cope with risks and shocks through (limited) livelihood diversification and informal institutions for risk-sharing and risk management. But as the frequency and severity of shocks increase, the effectiveness of informal, community-based systems is being challenged.

In this context, it is concerning that only 45 per cent of the global population is effectively covered by at least one social benefit, while the remaining 55 per cent—4 billion people—are left unprotected³. The coverage of both contributory and non-contributory social protection is even more limited in rural areas, leaving poor households without a minimum sufficient income or mechanisms to effectively manage risks and shocks. In many countries (including countries where agriculture is the main source of employment),

[https://ipcig.org/pub/eng/PIF45 Universal social protection a target for all.pdf](https://ipcig.org/pub/eng/PIF45%20Universal%20social%20protection%20a%20target%20for%20all.pdf) (page 34) and [https://ipcig.org/pub/eng/PIF44 Rural poverty reduction in the 21st century.pdf](https://ipcig.org/pub/eng/PIF44%20Rural%20poverty%20reduction%20in%20the%2021st%20century.pdf) (page 29)

³ https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_601903/lang--en/index.htm

social protection legislation explicitly excludes the rural population (agricultural workers, fishermen, foresters and casual workers) without the provision of alternative schemes. For instance, although poorer and rural households are more likely to receive social assistance, they receive slightly smaller amounts of assistance per capita than their better-off and urban counterparts⁴. In terms of insurance, 56 per cent of the population in rural areas lack health coverage, compared to 22 per cent in urban areas⁵.

Even when social protection does reach rural areas, these systems rarely respond to the added and specific vulnerabilities of rural households and communities effectively, including across agricultural subsectors. If there is no explicit effort made to expand coverage in rural areas, overall progress on SDG 1.3, as well as on other SDGs, may be stalled.

What are the key barriers faced by those living in rural areas to effectively access social protection systems?

Understanding the barriers that hinder rural populations' access to social protection services and benefits is essential to developing appropriate policy responses to effectively bridge the gap in terms of the population covered and the type of vulnerabilities and risks addressed by existing programmes. Some barriers are explicit, and some are implicit (often financial and administrative)—thus all the more difficult to remove. This requires understanding first and foremost the heterogeneity of the rural population, and hence their different needs and possibilities, to tailor or extend existing or new social protection schemes and services.

Some examples include:

- Legal barriers: Social security entitlements are usually set out in national labour legislation, but in many contexts the agricultural and natural resources sector is not explicitly included in labour and social security provisions and legislation
- Low contributory capacity (including costs of affiliation and compliance): The informal nature and type of employment can make it harder for workers to contribute regularly to schemes
- Accessibility of services (such as health care or social security offices) in rural settings, in terms of physical location, socio-cultural pertinence or information gaps
- Limited trust in social security systems or a prevailing perception that benefits are not relevant (i.e. benefits only cover life-cycle vulnerabilities but without considering the vagaries and volatility of livelihoods in a rural setting)
- The structure of social security systems may not be compatible with the instability (or seasonality) of agricultural employment (i.e. time-frame to receive benefits); and added administrative complexities in rural areas.
- Women and indigenous peoples face additional constraints in accessing social protection which are not often taken into account in the design of such systems

What options exist to remove these barriers?

Social protection systems have evolved and expanded considerably in recent years in many countries through different types of schemes and programmes, including tax-financed universal schemes, targeted schemes and contributory schemes, supported by stronger policies and more efficient administrative tools in the best cases.

⁴ <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/2015/en/>

⁵ <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowRessource.action?ressource.ressourceId=51297>

Programmes that have successfully covered rural workers and their families are those where benefits, contribution mechanisms and service delivery have been adapted to the specificities of the rural population. In short, policies and programmes need to make social protection accessible to rural people, and actively address the barriers they face through appropriate programme design and implementation. Examples include flexible and timely transfers to address the financial barriers related to seasonality in incomes of agricultural workers; the introduction of employment or income guarantee schemes to provide some income insurance during slack agriculture or fisheries seasons; the introduction of contribution subsidisation for health and crop insurance; legal and administrative reforms to increase the scope of coverage; and the introduction of universal schemes.

On this basis, we propose several recommendations, which should be considered in the context of different rural populations, the state of social protection and the barriers to access in each context. In addition, these recommendations have policy, programming and fiscal implications, which need to be better understood.

- Consider rural living and working conditions: Policy options for extending coverage to rural populations are never exhaustive. However, it is critical to focus on the risks, vulnerabilities and the peculiar conditions faced by different segments as the basis for programme design and intervention. A thorough diagnostics of barriers to coverage for heterogeneous rural populations and their livelihoods (e.g. fisheries, forestry and pastoralist segments) and the reasons behind implementation gaps for existing entitlements would inform an appropriate policy mix (including targeted interventions and special programmes).
- Expand and adapt legal frameworks of social protection to include rural populations: Legal frameworks are the basis of rights and entitlements. In the absence of legislation, no entitlements may exist, and coverage simply is not available. Legal frameworks are also an important underlying foundation for government fiscal commitments, accountability and the long-term sustainability of schemes. As a first step to ensuring the coverage of rural populations, national social protection legislation must establish basic legal guarantees and enforce entitlements for rural dwellers. International/global frameworks on social protection should provide policy guidance and increase the visibility of the plight of the vast uncovered rural populations. Farmer registries can also support the legal visibility of farmers and farm workers, including information not only on assets but also on socio-economic conditions, which can later be linked with social security entitlements.
- Make social protection more affordable for rural populations: The low contributory capacity of poor people in rural areas is a significant barrier to their coverage in contributory schemes. This can be addressed through the introduction of subsidized pillars or contributions for income-constrained workers. This approach has resulted in increases in uptake—for instance, for agricultural insurance and health insurance. For fiscal sustainability and broader risk pooling, such schemes can be integrated into existing national statutory schemes. For non-contributory schemes, the costs (including opportunity costs) of participation and demonstrating compliance are usually higher for rural populations. They can be reduced by simplifying administrative processes and ensuring that information and social protection services are readily accessible, such that they do not place additional financial stress on rural participants.
- Enhance capacity to deliver: Over that last decade, social protection coverage has expanded in many countries. However, many of the poorest people (mostly in rural areas) are not reached,

largely because the coverage of social assistance programmes is still limited in many low-income countries because of limited fiscal and institutional capacity. Minimum essential coverage in health and old-age security for all seems to be the outlook for many countries. However, financing and delivering such programmes often requires difficult expenditure choices—informed by appropriate costing and fiscal space analysis. For contributory schemes, the extension of coverage is also closely related to institutional capacity. In both cases, to effectively reach disadvantaged rural populations, additional investments are needed in demand-driven service delivery of social protection, and innovative delivery options need to be sought.

- Move the rural social protection agenda forward: Many of the barriers to and issues around effectively extending coverage to rural populations are structural—generally related to poverty, informality and the nature of rurality. Addressing these may go beyond programme-specific interventions. A broader integrated rural-specific policy framework may be required. To this end, strong consideration could be given to a global, context-specific policy framework for extending social protection to rural populations, also including the agricultural sector and looking at how coherence with agricultural policies and programmes can support the extension of coverage.
- Support Governments in learning from social protection schemes that have worked in countries with similar socio-economic conditions. In line with the above item, countries are often more open to learn from existing experiences from neighboring countries than from theoretical plans suggested by development partners, who frequently do not face many of the challenges of developing nations. On this, South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) are seen as great tools for promoting knowledge exchanges and horizontal learning. With the support of FAO, more than 20 African countries have already engaged in different SSTC schemes for discussing and understanding each other's social protection and resilience policies, strategies and/or projects, which can then be adapted and implemented in the countries participating in such exchanges.

Priority 2: Enhancing synergies between social protection, rural development, climate adaptation and resilience⁶

Despite important progress, there are still 738 million people living in extreme poverty worldwide; 80 percent in rural areas. Even in contexts where social protection is reaching the rural poor, they still face major constraints in accessing resources, managing risks and fair economic opportunities to move progressively from subsistence to more productive, diversified and sustainable livelihoods. Their

⁶ Full review and reference documents can be found at: ; Davis, B., S. Handa, N. Hypher, N. Winder Rossi, P. Winters, and J. Yablonski. 2016a. *From Evidence to Action: The Story of Cash Transfers and Impact Evaluation in Sub Saharan Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (<http://www.fao.org/policy-support/resources/resources-details/en/c/459165/>); Sudhanshu Handa, Silvio Daidone, Amber Peterman, Benjamin Davis, Audrey Pereira, Tia Palermo, and Jennifer Yablonski, *Myth-Busting? Confronting Six Common Perceptions about Unconditional Cash Transfers as a Poverty Reduction Strategy in Africa*. *The World Bank Research Observer*, Volume 33, Issue 2, August 2018, Pages 259–298(<https://academic.oup.com/wbro/article/33/2/259/5127165>); Strengthening Coherence between Agriculture and Social Protection to Combat Poverty and Hunger in Africa: Framework for Analysis and Action of Coherence between Social Protection and Agriculture, 2015, FAO (<http://www.fao.org/social-protection/resources/resources-detail/en/c/445007/>); For a specific analysis of this approach in Latin America, please see: Winder Rossi, N. y Faret, P. 2019. *Garantías mínimas de protección social para el desarrollo incluyente de la economía rural en América Latina y el Caribe*. 2030 - Alimentación, agricultura y desarrollo rural en América Latina y el Caribe, No. 22. Santiago de Chile. FAO. (<http://www.fao.org/3/ca5461es/ca5461es.pdf>)

production and consumption decisions are interdependent, curtailing their ability to engage effectively with economic processes at territorial and national levels. Furthermore, exposure to climate-related risk, conflict and forced displacement further exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and/or reverses advances in terms of food security and income generation.

As stated earlier, in the context of rural poverty reduction, a thriving rural sector requires adequate advisory services, innovative technological practices, climate smart practices, vibrant markets and investment, but it also requires enhancing the capacity of rural small-scale family farmers, those living in hard-to-reach areas, indigenous people, elderly, women and youth in particular, to access them. The main objective is the development of a comprehensive strategy of economic participation and inclusion of the poorest, which envisions the gradual integration of households into broader rural and economic development processes, going beyond risk management and “short term graduation”. A two pronged strategy can be considered: enhancing economic and productive capacity of the poorest and marginalized, while at the same time making economic processes more inclusive, with a strong emphasis on identifying opportunities at the territorial level.

In this context, social protection- in the form of social assistance- can be considered as a key and essential enabler for economic inclusion, particularly for the extreme poor, while also –in the form of insurance or security- an enhancer of asset and human capital accumulation and guarantee of decent work. In other words, it is essential to have essential needs met to provide a solid foundation towards economic inclusion, while recognizing the productive capacity, even when labor capacity and access to assets is constrained.

Box 1: Two pronged strategy to promote economic inclusion via social protection

Enhancing capacities:

Social protection is a key/necessary entry point to facilitate and enable the economic inclusion of the poorest

- Enabler: Allowing families to invest in both social and productive activities; Managing risks; enhance resilience capacity / risk transfer
- Enhancer: Allowing families to sustain accumulation of human capital and assets, while managing the inherent risks of economic activities in rural areas

Promoting Inclusive and sustainable transformation

- Economic inclusion requires however, the identification of economic opportunities in rural areas (including those created by the demand of urban-rural linkages)

How does social protection make this contribution?

In addition to social impacts, social protection has been proven to have productive impacts, thus to enhance their impact and sustainability over the long term, it is important to coordinate social interventions with agricultural and economic inclusion strategies. Evidence is clear in the broad range of impacts that social protection programmes generate. A broad evidence base generated in recent years has helped allay some of the policy concerns associated with social assistance, including data that show

how cash transfers – rather than being a “handout” – can generate important social and economic impacts. This has shifted perspectives of social protection, so that it is now widely viewed as a strategic investment that enhances human capital, raises the participants' productive capacity, and strengthens local economies. Social protection,

- alleviate liquidity and credit constraints
- help to manage income and consumption shocks
- facilitate the engagement in riskier but more profitable livelihood strategies both within and out of agriculture
- Increase access to more diversified and better quality food
- Increase participation in social networks
- Stimulate demand for locally produced food and other goods and services
- Is an investment and has concrete economic returns

Ensuring that these impacts are sustained over time and maximized, requires not only building social protection systems that are robust and comprehensive, but is also predicated on the promotion of synergies between social protection, food security and nutrition, disaster risk management and agricultural policies- embedding social protection as part of broad rural development frameworks. In this context, critical strategies are those that contribute to supporting the development of roadmaps and context-specific pathways for economic inclusion, scaling up cash+ interventions, building evidence on the best strategies, while supporting the development of comprehensive strategies for the progressive integration of social protection participation into broader rural development and economic policies and programmes that can be sustained and scaled up over time.

What does coherence or integration look like?

The maximization of the productive and economic potential of social protection is based on regularity, stability and amount of transfers (in the case of cash-based social assistance, as well as mechanisms to ensure both the supply and demand of labour of participant individuals of social protection programmes.

Explicitly reaching households covered by social assistance programmes when designing economic and productive inclusion interventions is imperative, as a first step to effectively target and reach the poorest and excluded. Equally important is to develop specific approaches to enhance the capacity of poor households to take advantage of economic opportunities at territorial level, including access to financial education, skills training, labor intermediation, strengthening of community networks, specific agriculture training responding. This should go hand in hand with ensuring that complementary and advisory economic services are accessible to these communities, and that they are designed in ways that can respond to their specific needs and capacity, while promoting collective action, effective voice and participation and strengthening of organization skills to further maximize their capacity to capitalize from economic options

From a policy and programmatic coherence dimension, examples of coordination include:

- Economic inclusion strategies integrated to national programmes for poverty reduction and/or rural development, focused on the same participants of social protection programmes
- Integrating elements of social protection in the investment plans for agriculture and territorial development
- Policies, strategies and operational action plans with mechanisms to ensure multi-sector coordination and planning, including specific structures with effective incentives to enforce effective coordination at national and sub-national levels
- Social protection programmes and productive inclusion that share the same targeted population (individuals / households/ communities / territories). This can be enhanced via enhancing synergies between social protection management information systems, including registries and farmer registries and harmonized delivery systems (eg: linkage between agriculture extension workers and social workers, among other)
- Integrating social protection in sustainable agriculture strategies- in terms of targeting, but also as a core approach to address barriers to uptake innovative practices, sustainable practices, climate-smart technologies and solutions (See Box 2).

In all dimensions, promoting coherence should be supported by informed multi-dimensional and context-specific risk and vulnerability analysis (social + economic + environmental + crisis), while implemented with a certain degree of flexibility to allow for effective scale-up.

On this, SSTC has also been proved as an effective mechanism for learning from other countries' coordination mechanisms: what has worked and what were the challenges in developing such coordination schemes. It is often clearer how to establish coordination mechanisms once it is understood how other countries with similar conditions have achieved so.

How does this change in the context of fragility?

Given the specific and added challenges of climate variability and change, social protection programming has also been identified as a core strategy for risk management: reducing the negative coping mechanisms poor households are forced to resort to in the event of crises- including selling off productive assets, over-deforestation, decreasing diverse diets, etc. Access to predictable and sizeable transfers have proven effective in mitigating the negative impact of climate related shocks, for instance in the context of El Niño, and other food crises and/or climate-related disasters. The role of social protection is also being explored in terms of reducing risk aversion and promoting sustainable investments. FAO and partners have contributed to the development of new technologies and innovative practices to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of farming, fishing and forestry practices. However, barriers related to cost, time, limited access to credit, training, information and risk behavior have on many occasions prevented particularly small-scale family farmers from benefitting from these advances, further exacerbating the cycle of exclusion and poverty. Even though social protection programmes may not address all of the barriers, predictable access to programme benefits, such as cash transfers, especially when coupled with productive support or insurance, can enhance the risk management and risk transfer capacities of vulnerable farmers, thereby reducing their risk aversion and promoting investments in more sustainable and productive practices.

Box 2: Social protection to promote sustainable agriculture practices in Paraguay
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A key example of this potential is the newly approved Green Climate Fund Project in Paraguay, PROEZA, “Poverty, Reforestation, Energy and Climate Change”. It proposes a paradigm shift towards low-emission sustainable development pathways with a dual approach aimed at promoting climate mitigation and adaptation, while also contributing to extreme rural poverty reduction. PROEZA aims to: (i) implement incentives to mitigate climate change through planting fast growing trees in mixtures with valuable native species and (ii) contribute to reduce rural extreme poverty, particularly within forest communities and indigenous peoples, through the diversification of production and options to increase family incomes through the establishment of climate smart agro-forestry production systems and/or multifunctional “close to nature” planted forests.

One important innovation of the project includes strengthening the existing national social protection programme. In this context, building on Paraguay’s national flagship social assistance programme, **Tekoporã** (a conditional cash transfer, social protection programme), allows to (i) ensure the poorest are benefiting from climate adaptation interventions, while (ii) addressing the economic barriers to progressively transition from subsistence to productive and sustainable livelihoods.

In fact, almost 60 percent of the extreme poor live in fragile situations where climate change and/or conflict erode their livelihoods⁷, while one third are in countries with recurrent humanitarian appeals⁸. They continue to be overrepresented among those affected by food crises. As identified by the 2017 and 2018 Global Report on Food Crises (FSIN 2017 and 2018), conflict and climate-related risks are major drivers of protracted food crises, often compounded by poor access to natural resources, limited infrastructure, social exclusion, chronic inter-generational poverty and demographic pressures.

Man-made and natural crises do not only further exacerbate the existing vulnerabilities of those living in the rural sector and dependent on natural resources, but can also reverse the gains in terms of hunger and poverty reduction. “Leaving no one behind” requires a strong commitment to ending poverty and fostering resilience and partnerships across the different sectors. It is critical to identify innovative and flexible approaches to help reverse this trend: FAO, together with partners such as ECHO, DFID, UNICEF, WFP, World Bank and others, have identified “risk informed and shock responsive social protection” as one key innovation in this regard. If properly designed, social protection programmes can not only help to address the structural causes of chronic poverty and enhance the productive capacity of the poorest, but can also contribute to take on some of humanitarian caseloads in case of crises.

Risk informed and shock responsive social protection systems provide the humanitarian community with the opportunity to use well developed (and at scale) structures to effectively respond to crises - supporting the poorest and the most vulnerable. Moreover, the extensive operational expertise of humanitarian actors in fragile and forced displacement contexts, can provide the development community with innovative approaches and out of the box thinking, on which they can base the development of social protections systems designed ad-hoc to address the variable needs of people affected by cyclical threats and crisis

What are the implications of coherence in the context of climate and conflict-related risks?

⁷ Humanitarian Assistance Report 2018

⁸ https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GHA%20report%202019_0.pdf

Efforts to eradicate extreme rural poverty require integrating risk-sensitive programming, while humanitarian action requires addressing the root causes of crises, including social, environmental and economic. In this context, integrating a risk and shock responsive dimension into social protection systems imply:

- Scalable and flexible programming, supported by key mechanisms such as contingency funds, price indexing, to allow the vertical or horizontal expansion in participants or transfer size, when needed;
- Multi-sector criteria for targeting and eligibility of social protection programmes, including a mix of socio-economic and risk related variables to better reflect multiple and compounding vulnerabilities
- Integrated information systems for anticipatory or early action, including linking social protection information systems (at national or sub-national levels) to climate-related information systems, food crisis analysis and data, while defining multi-sector triggers for early action response;
- When the situation permits and in line of humanitarian principles, strengthen the capacity of governments (including social development/protection and agriculture ministries), communities and households to effectively prevent crises, including investing enhancing disaster risk management capacities and long-term institutional building across social and rural development sectors;
- When possible, deliver response via national and community social protection systems structures, while enhancing their risk components and response capacity, as well as supporting reconstruction strategies to address immediate damage, while supporting the recovery of livelihoods and income generating opportunities for the extreme poor. In addition, support the design of economic and social approaches that can act as peace dividends and/or promoters of social cohesion;
- Define monitoring and evaluation frameworks that are able to capture short-term results, as well as longer term impacts across economic, environmental and social dimensions;
- Building a strong economic and rate of return case for investing in prevention and anticipatory actions via social protection, particularly in poor and at risk territories, as well as for protecting social (and social protection) spending in moments of economic crises and fiscal austerity; promoting joint humanitarian and development financing to ensure long-term assessments, while addressing core emergency information needs).

Conclusion

Rural poverty reduction should be seen as a long-term strategy, where strengthening capacities is essential but also strengthen institutions and processes at national and sub-national level that can generate inclusive opportunities for economic and social inclusion. In this context, social protection becomes a critical component. Social protection addresses the interdependent relationship between consumption and production decisions, which lie at the core of most rural households, especially those living in extreme poverty. Social protection, in the form of social assistance acts as a critical enabler of economic activities, providing a minimum income base, while at the same time enhancing essential capacities to take advantage of income generating opportunities at territorial level. In the form of insurance and social security, it can enhance economic activities, including ensuring decent work practices and a strengthened risk management capacity. The way social protection is designed and accessed should respond to the specific characteristics of specific households, in terms of those experienced across the lifecycle but also across livelihoods.