



Africa Dialogue Series 2022

Building Resilience in Nutrition on the African Continent:  
Accelerate the Human Capital, Social and Economic  
Development

*3-27 May 2022*

**Concept Note Week Three (16-20 May 2022): “*Social protection’s role in enhancing food security and nutrition for greater resilience in Africa*”**

## **I. Background**

Countries in Africa have battled numerous shocks spanning multiple dimensions in recent decades – including health, political, economic, social, and climatic ones. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a triple health, education, and socio-economic crisis that has further impacted countries’ development prospects for years to come. Soaring food and fuel prices resulting from the conflict in Ukraine are expected to further worsen the food and nutrition security situation of several African countries<sup>1</sup>.

These recurring and prolonged crises are pushing more and more Africans into a vicious cycle of hunger, malnutrition, and vulnerability. In 2022, over 100 million people across hotspot countries in the continent – a 22% increase from 2021 – are projected to be in acute food insecurity (IPC3 or higher)<sup>2</sup>. Malnutrition rates are also expected to deteriorate

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<sup>1</sup> In 81 countries where WFP works, acute hunger is expected to rise by 47 million people if the conflict in Ukraine continues past April 2022 – this is a staggering 17% jump – with the steepest rises in sub-Saharan Africa.

<sup>2</sup> [FAO and WFP. 2022 Hunger Hotspots](#)

as a result, exacerbating an already dire situation: nearly 40% of the world's stunted children and about one-quarter of children affected by wasting globally lived in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020<sup>3</sup>. The repeated patterns of shock-response and mitigation have diverted the attention of governments from longer-term investments in sustainable development, as they have been forced to manage and mitigate the impact of crises at hand.

***Social protection as a key tool to advance nutrition and resilience in the continent***  
Africa has shown very strong political will at the highest level to put in place policies and programmes aimed at building sustainable development, combating poverty and ensuring effective access to social security to all the population<sup>4</sup>.

Comprehensively designed, universal, and carefully implemented social protection systems represent investments in human capital development and are an important part of the solution to reaching multiple development objectives simultaneously, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular goal 1 on ending poverty and goal 2 on zero hunger, and the African Union Agenda 2063. Indeed, rigorous evaluations of well-designed and implemented social protection systems, schemes and programmes have demonstrated positive effects on people's well-being and livelihoods, including on food security, nutrition, health, resilience, gender equality, economic inclusion, decent work, natural resource management and climate change adaptation and mitigation<sup>5</sup>.

Social protection is at the cornerstone of policies that seek to reduce poverty and address vulnerability, through interventions that help individuals or households to meet essential needs and manage risks. Social protection can also help people attain their food and nutrition needs, by increasing families' purchasing power and therefore access to nutritious food, as well as by relieving some negative impact of shocks and stressors that affect the consumption of healthy diets. Finally, it can help combating inequalities, which are frequently intersected with malnutrition. This has the potential to foster human capital development, social cohesion, and inclusive economic growth<sup>6</sup>. For instance,

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<sup>3</sup> [FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021.](#)

<sup>4</sup> The political commitment is reflected in the Yaoundé Tripartite Declaration on the implementation of the Social Protection Floor (2011), the AUC's Ouagadougou + 10 Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development (2015), the Addis Ababa Declaration on Transforming Africa through Decent Work for Sustainable Development, the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the Abidjan Declaration-Advancing Social Justice: Shaping the future of work in Africa among others. At the global level, African Member States have also committed to Universal Social Protection as expressed in the 2019 Centenary Declaration, Global Call to Action for a Human-Centred Recovery from the COVID-19 Crisis (2021) the Resolution and Conclusion of the Recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) (2021).

<sup>5</sup> See for instance, research from the Transfer project (<https://transfer.cpc.unc.edu/>); World Bank (2019). 'The contribution of social protection and jobs to human capital formation', ILO (2017) 'World Social Protection Report 2017-19: Universal social protection to achieve the SDGs', Abay, K., Berhane, G., Hoddinott, J. and Tafere, K. (2020). 'COVID-19 and food security in Ethiopia: Do social protection programmes protect?', World Bank Policy Research Paper 9475. Bastagli, Francesca, Jessica Hagen-Zanker, Luke Harman, Valentina Barca, Georgina Sturge, and Tanja Schmidt. 2019. "The Impact of Cash Transfers: A Review of the Evidence from Low- and Middle-Income Countries." *Journal of Social Policy* 48 (3): 569–94.

<sup>6</sup> [World Food Programme Strategy for Support to Social Protection - 2021 | World Food Programme \(wfp.org\)](#)

national school feeding programmes can yield up to 1:9 in economic return from improved health, education and productivity<sup>7</sup>.

### ***The way forward***

While commitment to social protection by governments and their partners, both at the national and regional levels, has long been increasing, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought forth the gaps in coverage and adequacy of social protection. Indeed, the most recent ILO estimates show that Africa is the region with the lowest social protection coverage in the world - 17% of the total population compared with the global average of 47%<sup>8</sup>. Significant coverage and financing gaps remain across the region with respect to children, mothers with new-borns, unemployed workers, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable population groups<sup>9</sup>. For instance, 60 million children living in extreme poverty and hunger in the African continent still do not have access to meals in school<sup>10</sup>. These considerations accelerate the urgency and the need for opportunities to scale-up and expand social protection in the region. The Africa Regional Social Protection Strategy 2021-2025, launched by the ILO and the African Union Commission, aims to support Africa Member states and stakeholders to accelerate social protection, with the target of reaching 40% coverage by 2025.

Effectively leveraging social protection to advance nutrition for greater resilience in the continent requires transformative and multi-stakeholder actions including:

- **Ensuring inclusive, comprehensive, and adequate protection throughout the life cycle**, combining social insurance, social assistance and other means towards universal coverage. This should support the inclusion of people with diverse, and often intersecting vulnerabilities and inequalities (e.g., economic, social, geographical) – to reach those most often left behind.
- **Deliberately incorporating food security and nutrition objectives into social protection strategies, policies, and programmes** – to safeguard and foster people’s ability to meet food security and nutrition needs, and to promote their health and well-being, now and in the future. This also entails deliberately establishing synergies with the food systems, to ensure that supply meets the increased demand, especially for specific nutritious foods.
- **Promoting resilient and shock-responsive approaches that better help people in managing risks during sudden emergencies or seasonal stressors**, while strengthening the humanitarian–development–peace nexus in fragile settings.
- **Strengthening governance of social protection systems through institutional leadership as well as multi-sector and multi-stakeholder coordination**, in line with national priorities. This means adopting a systems/integrated approach to social protection that looks beyond the delivery of individual programmes and interventions, but rather integrates them across sectors (i.e., agriculture, health, education, etc.) to enhance inclusiveness, coherence, and financial sustainability. This can be achieved also by leveraging digital technologies for social inclusion.

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<sup>7</sup> [State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020 | World Food Programme](#)

<sup>8</sup> ILO (2021). ‘World Social Protection Report: 2020-22: Social protection at the crossroads – in pursuit of a better future’

<sup>9</sup> ILO (2021). ‘World Social Protection Report: 2020-22: Social protection at the crossroads – in pursuit of a better future’

<sup>10</sup> ACPF (2019). For Lack of Will: Child Hunger in Africa.

- **Ensuring the sustainability of social protection systems by prioritizing reliable, sustainable and equitable forms of financing**, focusing on increased allocations of domestic resources, complemented by international cooperation. Financing strategies for social protection should strongly incorporate principles of equity, social solidarity, and sustainability.
- **Harnessing** the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions for creating decent work in the ruraleconomy and ensuring access to social protection for rural populations and thus supporting food security and nutrition.

## II. Objectives

- Share evidence, good practices, and investment cases to highlight the role that quality social protection systems, schemes and programmes can play in improving nutrition outcomes and enhancing the ability of households and communities to cope with, and recover from, shocks and stressors – leaving none behind.
- Discuss barriers to implement quality nutrition-sensitive social protection, which is multisectoral in nature, requires strong linkages with agri-food and health systems, and contributes to nutrition objectives and greater resilience.
- Explore strategies to make nutrition-sensitive social protection systems more shock-responsive – including strengthening the enabling environment, making social protection more adaptive and risk-informed, as well as adequately funded.
- Bring unrepresented voices to the forefront, particularly those of African think tanks, civil society organizations, the youth, networks of people living with and affected by HIV, as well as people benefiting from social protection programmes.
- Launch a call to action to accelerate coordinated investments and actions on social protection and embed them within wider multisectoral efforts aimed at driving progress on nutrition and building resilience in Africa.

## III. Outcomes

- Recognition of the need for placing food security and nutrition front and centre of shock-responsive social protection mechanisms, as an essential requirement to both responding to crises and achieving human capital and socio-economic development.
- An improved understanding of what it takes to achieve a nutrition-sensitive social protection which has appropriate coverage, adequacy, comprehensiveness, and inclusiveness – leaving no one behind – as well as an increased understanding of the operational and financial bottlenecks to achieve this vision, together with strategies to address them.
- An elevated motivation and commitment from governments, donors, and other stakeholders, towards greater investments and improved coordination on social protection – linked to other intervention across agri-food, health, education, and other national systems – to address the nutrition challenges in the continent and build long-term resilience.
- An opportunity to amplify unrepresented perspectives within global policy fora, in particular beneficiaries of social protection programmes.

## IV. Programme

### Overview

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| <b>Monday, 16 May 2022</b>    | <b>Screening of video content on social protection, nutrition and resilience in Africa</b>                                       |
| <b>Tuesday, 17 May 2022</b>   | Screening of deep-dive interviews with subject matter experts  |
| <b>Wednesday, 18 May 2022</b> | Live Global Webinar: <i>“Social protection’s role in enhancing food security and nutrition for greater resilience in Africa”</i> |
| <b>Thursday, 19 May 2022</b>  | Youth Event with twitter stage   |
| <b>Friday, 20 May 2022</b>    | Music event  |

### Detailed Agenda

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| <b>Monday, 16 May 2022 - Video Screening</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ILO: 5 videos on social protection exposing the challenges and opportunities for extending social protection in Africa</li> <li>• WFP: 5 videos on social protection, nutrition, and resilience in the African context</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Tuesday, 17 May 2022 - Interviews with subject matter experts</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two interviews with experts on the topic of around 10-12 minutes each. The aim is to put the spotlight on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food and nutrition security situation in the African context, including challenges and opportunities, focusing on important role of social protection to improve the food and nutrition situation</li> <li>○ Present relevant policy tools on the subject matter. This will include tools that are pivotal to bridge the humanitarian-development nexus, design shock responsive social protection for greater food security and nutrition, data and monitoring tools etc.</li> <li>○ Share good practices and lessons learned from the Africa continent</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <b>Wednesday, 18 May 2022 - Live Global Webinar: “Social protection’s role in enhancing food security and nutrition for greater resilience in Africa” (9:00-10:30 AM EST)</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Zoom live webinar (90 minutes) will consist of 4 parts as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Opening remarks, including by ILO and WFP representatives, who will contextualize the discussion and the work each organization does to promote nutrition sensitive social protection across the continent.</li> <li>○ Interactive panel discussion with 4–5 speakers (including those interviewed on the previous day) from different stakeholder groups, namely government, academia, civil society, employers organizations, and participants.</li> <li>○ Q&amp;A session with the audience.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |

- A final call to action for nutrition sensitive social protection towards the achievement of related SDG goals by 2030.

#### Thursday, 19 May 2022 - Youth Event

- Organization of a live twitter event with Africa's youths to get their views and inputs on food security, nutrition, and access to social protection. The discussion will focus on understanding the views and conceptions on nutrition and linkages to social protection and jobs, as well as the role of Africa's youths in promoting policies that respond to their needs in both issues.