



CALL FOR ACTION

WORLD FOOD DAY 2015

" Social Protection and Agriculture -Breaking the Cycle of Rural Poverty"

This year world food day will be celebrated on 16 October with the main theme " Social Protection and Agriculture -Breaking the Cycle of Rural Poverty ".

In recent years, around 150 million people overcame extreme poverty thanks to social protection programmes. Food insecurity refers to both the inability to secure an adequate diet today and the risk of being unable to do so in the future. Social protection is a menu of policy instruments that addresses poverty and vulnerability, through social assistance, social insurance and efforts at social inclusion. Social protection has risen rapidly up the development policy agenda. The right to adequate food and the right to social protection are human rights under international law, and that implementing social protection policies and programmes using a rights based approach is not only morally and legally appropriate but is likely to lead to improved food security outcomes.

People who are already poor are vulnerable to hunger because they lack the resources to meet their basic needs on a daily basis. They are also highly vulnerable to even small shocks that will push them closer to destitution, starvation, even premature mortality. The appropriate social protection response to chronic poverty-related food insecurity is social assistance linked to 'livelihood promotion' measures that enhance incomes.

People who are not poor now but face the risk of future poverty are vulnerable to hunger if these risks materialise and they are inadequately protected against them (they will face transitory food insecurity). These people need effective 'social safety nets'. Social protection systems should not be seen as 'deadweight' burdens on fiscal systems. Well-designed social protection interventions are good for growth. In particular, by preventing the depletion of assets and reducing the personal risk of investing for the poor, social protection can be a 'win-win' strategy: pro-poor and pro-growth.

Social protection exists when governments develop policies and programmes to address economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty. Through cash transfers, vouchers, insurances and in-kind contributions, social protection programmes enhance the income, status and capacities of poor and vulnerable people. Social protection improves people's access to health care and other social services, enabling them to sustainably provide for themselves and their family members.

In the absence of social protection, poor households, which are already constrained by limited access to resources and services, are at constant risk of hunger and poverty, especially when faced with a crisis or shock of any nature. Social protection is critical in such cases because, the economic or in-kind support it provides prevents people from hunger in the short term. Moreover, by stimulating production, social protection provides greater income stability and ability to manage risk, thus contributing to reducing poverty and food insecurity in the longer-term.

Social Protection helps tackle vulnerabilities faced by rural households and plays a fundamental role in improving food and nutrition security and reducing rural poverty. The predictability of

social protection instruments enables households to better manage risks and engage in more profitable livelihoods. The impact of social protection systems is greater if they are coordinated with broader food and nutrition security, rural development and poverty reduction strategies

FAO's role in social protection

About 73 percent of the world population have no access to adequate social protection (ILO,2014). A majority of people without social protection live in the rural areas of developing countries, many of them dependent on agriculture to make a living. Poor rural households are already constrained by limited access to resources, low agricultural productivity and poorly functioning markets, which reduce their ability to cope with economic and natural risks and shocks that threaten their livelihoods.

Providing them with access to social protection helps them to better manage the social and economic risks and environmental threats they are exposed to. Through direct income support to the most vulnerable households, social protection helps alleviate extreme poverty and overcome food insecurity. At the same time, by providing more income security and investing in rural livelihoods, social protection can contribute to improve agricultural productivity, stimulate local economic development, build resilience, encourage sustainable natural resource uses and promote social inclusion.

If properly designed, social protection tends to benefit women and promotes their economic and social empowerment. Similarly, it can also benefit children and youth, as social protection helps improve nutrition and health outcomes inasmuch as household income security allows young people to stay in school longer, and cash for work programmes help enhance employment opportunities for youth.

Synergies with food and agriculture and rural development policies

FAO must be committed to support governments and partners in addressing the main challenges for incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions to fight hunger and in promoting greater policy coherence and synergies between social protection, food and nutrition security, agricultural development, natural resource management and rural poverty reduction.

FAO's work must focus on:

- incorporating social protection into national strategies and actions to fight hunger and malnutrition;
- maximizing synergies between social protection and agricultural policies and articulating a coordinated strategy for rural development and poverty reduction;
- incorporating social protection into strategies and investment plans to increase resilience and adaptation to shocks;
- supporting governments in expanding social protection systems in rural areas;
- supporting governments and other stakeholders, including civil society organizations, in developing good governance systems.
- raising awareness among stakeholders on the role of social protection in reducing rural poverty and increasing economic and social empowerment;

World Food Day is an occasion to focus the world's attention on the crucial role played by social protection in eradicating hunger and poverty. Run up to the World Food day 2015, I would like to call upon all our member movements around the world to take up concrete actions in your movements in relation to the theme of the year. I thank all the movements that were involved in various actions last year

Some proposal of actions are mentioned below but each movement can organise activities based on their own reality.

- Organise sessions with a view to raise the debate on Social Protection in Agriculture
- Organise meetings with politicians and local self-governments to demand social protection schemes for the farmers and rural people
- Share the information about the existing viable social protections measures/Schemes
- Facilitating dialogues with Banks, Insurance companies and government agencies in your locality to collect data and to tap social protection schemes
- Organise one day volunteer work to save money and to support hunger eradication projects in your own places or send to the FIMARC World Food Day fund to support other people who are in need around the world
- Make any solidarity action like fasting to collect money to support the needy or to provide one nutritious meal to the hungry
- Organise Corner meetings, press conference, press release or demonstrations on the topic to raise the awareness of the society
- Take initiative for the knowledge generation and dissemination at the local, national levels through the collection and compilation of information, data and good practices on the impact of social protection schemes on rural poverty, food and nutrition security.

During this world food day of 2015, FIMARC requests all its member movements to have deep reflections, actions to raise the debate on Social Protection in Agriculture all over the world and to lobby for the policies that foster Social Protection and urge all the members to organise a common action day and send us the news about your activities.

Wish you all the best for your world food day actions of 2015
George Dixon Fernandez
Secretary General
ASSESSE, 25/08/2015
