



**KINGDOM OF BELGIUM**  
**Permanent Mission of Belgium**  
**to the United Nations**  
**In New York**

**Briefing organized by Argentina, Belgium, Indonesia and ILO on Social Protection and Post-2015**

**Wednesday 12 March 2014, UN – CB Room 9, 1:15 pm**

**Introductory remarks by H.E. Bénédicte Frankinet, Ambassador of Belgium**

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to share with you some Belgian thoughts on the Post-2015 development agenda, social protection and the role of ILO.

We are very much looking forward to the establishment of a Post-2015 agenda, building on the lessons learned from the MDGs. While we believe that the MDGs are a very good experience, we know that the world is changing fast and that any new framework will have to be adapted to the new circumstances. One of the weaknesses of the MDGs is that they have focused on overall progress, without taking into consideration the sometimes enormous differences between population groups within countries, with many people being excluded from growth and opportunities.

Throughout the Post-2015 debate therefore, Belgium will be highlighting the need to reduce inequalities, and the fundamental importance of social protection in order to achieve this.

We fully recognize the important contribution of ILO to the process so far. ILO's Decent Work Agenda has proven to be an excellent concept to address specific issues pertaining to human rights, employment and social justice. These issues need to be duly reflected in the new Post-2015 framework.

High and persistent inequalities are not only unacceptable from a moral standpoint, they also pose a risk for social cohesion and, as many studies have shown, they are bad for economic growth. Our rationale for including social protection in the sustainable development framework is that social protection is an excellent tool to tackle inequalities and to provide more equal opportunities for all. As an instrument for the fight against poverty, it is directly linked to the internationally agreed development goals and objectives. We are of the view that social protection should be present as widely as possible in the future development framework, as a safety net and a means to escape from the poverty trap.

This leads us to a fundamental question: is social protection a tool, contributing to reaching the established objectives in health, education and other areas, or should social protection be considered as a goal in itself? It is worth considering this question, because a stand-alone goal is likely to attract more political attention and foster more financial support. On the other hand, we must be very careful with overloading the Post-2015 agenda with competing stand-alone goals for each and every topic.

As all of us, Belgium has been following closely the debates in the open-ended working group on sustainable development goals. We welcome the first proposal of 19 focus areas, and in particular focus area 11 (employment and decent work for all) and focus area 12 (promoting equality), both mentioning explicitly social security and social protection.

The presence of the ILO Director for Social Protection here today is very timely. We know that ILO has been a very strong advocate for decent work and social protection. We can all benefit from ILO's experience and views. While there is a general acceptance that social protection has a role to play in the new agenda, there still is a demand for more clarity on the concept and how it could work in practice in countries with very different development levels and social systems.

I would therefore like to formulate a number of questions to guide our discussions today.

- Is there a basic “model” of social protection that can be translated at country level, regardless the differences in local situations? Do we have best practices that can be applied in other countries, or do we need to develop country-specific answers?
- There is not only a need for more clarity on what social protection means, and what it is expected to cover, but there also seem to be quite divergent views on the level the financial needs and on the ways to mobilize them. Some people have argued for the creation of a new Global Fund for Social Protection. Do you think this is the right approach? How much would it actually cost to ensure basic social protection?
- The ILO has advanced the notion of “Social Protection Floors”. What is the experience so far? How effective are these social protection floors? Where have they been implemented and what are the results?
- Regardless of the fact if social protection will be an overarching goal, or will be considered as a contributing factor, we will have to establish targets with concrete indicators and timeframes that allow us to measure progress. Is there any ongoing work in ILO that you would like to share with us in this regard?