

DYNAMIC SOCIAL SECURITY: A NECESSARY CONDITION FOR
INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

National social protection policies in West Africa: A comparative analysis

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Abstract The West African States recognize the importance of social protection and its dual social and economic function; a perspective that coincides fully with the topic of this special issue on Dynamic Social Security. Between 2007 and 2013 these States developed national social protection policies, strategies or action plans and are now engaged in their implementation. This article reviews these national social protection policies (or strategies) in ten countries in the sub-region (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal and Togo) and presents their contents, revealing a similarity of approach in the development of policies. Specifically, after having carried out a diagnostic study of social protection in their respective countries, the States followed seven distinct stages: defining a national vision, defining precisely what is meant by social protection, laying down the principles on which policies were to be based and finally setting out the general objectives, key areas and mechanisms for implementing and financing their national social protection policies. Following these stages, this comparative study seeks to outline the main trends and key elements of the national social protection policies and bring out best practices to provide a basic structure and general guidelines for

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developing a national social protection policy, implementing a social protection floor and promoting access to higher levels of protection.

Keywords social development, economic development, social policy, gaps in coverage, West Africa

Introduction

The West African States recognize the importance of social protection and its dual social and economic function. In effect, social protection promotes both social equity and economic growth. In addition to reducing economic, social and nutritional vulnerability and the negative impacts of other shocks, social protection constitutes a means to promote the productivity of households by raising their purchasing power and supporting child development particularly through education. Thus it contributes towards breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty through developing human capital. As part of strategies to combat poverty and promote sustainable development, social protection is an essential element.

It is therefore unsurprising that the national social protection policies and strategies of West African States should be inspired as much by strategies for the fight against poverty as by strategies for accelerated growth and sustainable development.

In an important manner, these same observations and trends contributed to the development of the Dynamic Social Security conceptual framework (McKinnon, 2007), the theme of this special issue, which aims to better link the objectives and actions of social security organizations with those of society and the national economy.

This analysis compares national social protection documents from ten West African States: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

Table 1 shows the reference documents, developed between 2007 and the end of 2013 for each of these States.

It is to be noted that all the States studied are not at the same stage in developing a national document: some have developed a policy, others a strategy, while others have opted for action plans. In the case of Benin, the only document currently available is a Unicef study summarizing the state of social protection and contemplating future opportunities (Hodges et al., 2010).¹ Despite States' differing

1. To simplify the study and make the task of comparison easier, the term "national policy" is used in the broad sense to encompass strategies, action plans and other studies on social protection.

Table 1. *National social protection documents*

States	National social protection documents	Dates
Benin	Unicef study regarding the social protection situation and perspectives in Benin	July 2010
Burkina Faso	National social protection policy	September 2012
Côte d'Ivoire	National social protection policy, provisional version (draft not yet politically approved)	February 14, 2013
Ghana	National social protection strategy (NSPS)	March 2007
Mali	National action plan for extending social protection 2011–2015	January 2011
Mauritania	National social protection strategy in Mauritania – Key element for equity and the fight against poverty	January 2012
Nigeria	National social protection policy, draft	October 2013
Niger	National social protection policy	August 2011
Senegal	National social protection strategy (NSPS)	–
Togo	National social protection policy, provisional document (draft not yet politically approved)	July 6, 2012

levels of progress, the national studies have similar structures that make the task of comparison easier. Indeed, we find seven recurring elements that have been adopted to structure our study: i) the national vision, ii) the definition of social protection, iii) the principles, iv) the general objectives, v) the key areas, vi) implementation and vii) financing. In fact, in most cases, the first step towards developing a national social protection document is the carrying out of a diagnostic study leading to a national vision.

The subsequent approach is to reach a precise definition of what is understood by social protection and then to set out the principles on which national policies are based. Thereafter, it is then a question of each State setting out general objectives, key areas and mechanisms for implementing and financing its national social protection policy.

Social protection in West Africa: The context

At present, social protection in West Africa is marked by a high degree of heterogeneity and a low levels of coverage (Table 2). The formal social security systems in place only cover a tiny segment of the population and neglect the most vulnerable groups. Workers with coverage only represent a small minority and form part of privileged categories: civil servants, members of the military and

Table 2. Old-age effective coverage

2A. Proportion of older women and men (above statutory pensionable age) receiving an old-age pension		
	Contributory	Non-contributory
Benin	9.7	na
Burkina Faso	3.2	na
Côte d'Ivoire	7.7	na
Ghana	7.6	na
Mali	5.7	na
Mauritania	9.3	na
Niger	6.1	na
Nigeria	na	0.4
Senegal	23.5	na
Togo	10.9	na

Note: na = not available.

Source: ILO (2014).

2B. Active contributors to a pension scheme (per cent)		
	Working-age (aged 15-64)	Labour force (aged 15+)
Benin	5.2	6.8
Burkina Faso	3.2	3.7
Côte d'Ivoire	6.3	8.8
Ghana	6.7	9.0
Mali	4.4	7.9
Mauritania	9.4	17.2
Niger	1.3	1.9
Nigeria	5.3	9.0
Senegal	5.0	6.2
Togo	3.1	3.7

Notes: Latest year available. na = not available.

Source: ILO (2014).

certain private-sector workers.² All other workers (workers in the informal sector, rural workers, independent workers, etc.) are not covered by formal social protection systems and are thus the most vulnerable to social risks and shocks.

To remedy this shortcoming, these societies depend on family-, community- or occupation-based forms of mutual support. These traditional solidarity systems include inter-family transfers, gifts, work-sharing, funeral societies and informal savings and loan mechanisms. However, even if informal solidarity systems have long been part of social strategies for managing risk by African households, these informal social safety nets are not only ineffective in the face of covariate shocks but exclude the poorest households. Furthermore, these social transfers are often sustained by development partnership projects that have no basis in law. Similarly, migration often serves as a social protection mechanism for households through, for example, the transfer of funds. Transfers from the diaspora to Africa have increased considerably and reached EUR 40 billion in 2010.³ Even if these remittances have a counter-cyclical effect on the households receiving them, they may decline during periods of economic crises in the migrants' host countries. West Africa can no longer rely on informal support networks that are increasingly inadequate in the face of new challenges.

Since the end of the 1990s, the will of West African States to promote social protection policies has been affirmed through national visions, development plans (national and international; Millennium Development Goals – MDG), poverty reduction plans (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper – PRSP; Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy – GPRS) as well as strategic policies and documents in specific fields such as employment, work, occupational health and safety, HIV/AIDS or health in general. At the regional level, the African Union committed itself to social protection by adopting the “African Union Social Policy Framework” at its conference of social development ministers held in Windhoek, Namibia in October 2008. This policy, which was ratified by the Executive Committee of the Heads of State at Addis Ababa in January 2009, notes the emergence of a consensus on the idea of a “minimum basic social protection package” and affirms that “social protection must constitute a state obligation” with relevant provisions in national legislation, national development plans and poverty reduction strategy documents. At sub-regional level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has followed the African Union’s (AU) lead in working towards the extension of social protection for all.

Several West African countries have adopted national social protection strategies or policies. Furthermore, almost all strategic documents on poverty reduction

2. See <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/multimedia/maps-and-charts/WCMS_244625/lang-fr/index.htm>.

3. According to the African Development Bank: <<http://www.afdb.org/fr/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/migration-and-development-initiative/afdb-migration-activities>>.

in Africa attach importance to social protection, which sometimes appears as one of the “key areas” of such strategies. This fact represents a considerable advance with regards to initial strategic documents on poverty reduction. The tripartite delegates from 47 African Member States of the International Labour Organization (ILO) meeting at the Second African Decent Work Symposium “Building a basic Social Protection Floor through the Global Jobs Pact” from 6 to 8 October 2010 adopted the tripartite Yaounde Declaration on implementing the Social Protection Floor.⁴ This was a major contribution by Africa towards the adoption of the International Labour Organization’s Recommendation concerning national floors of social protection, 2012 (No. 202).

Analysing national social protection policies: National visions

Defining a long-term vision and coherent policy package constitutes a first key step that is essential to avoiding a haphazard approach and last-minute decision making. A national vision describes what a country wishes to become, the national priorities and the objectives to be reached. The long-term vision underlying a national vision of social protection should form part of the general legislative framework, particularly with regard to social protection law, while remaining in keeping with the country’s development objectives and international standards on social protection.

National visions are based on the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and long-term results envisaged by national development and poverty reduction strategies (see Box 1). They are also constructed from the concerns, representations and definitions put forward by key actors (at national, regional and local level) as part of the consultative processes surrounding their formulation. They state the nation’s development objective both in economic and social terms, recognizing the key role of social protection in achieving that objective. Thus, in the “Burkina 2025” vision, solidarity has been retained as one of the building blocks in the construction of an emergent and internationally-recognized Burkina Faso. The construction of such national solidarity has taken place through the extension of social protection.⁵

It should be noted that solidarity is a recurring theme in the majority of the national visions reviewed. Reference is made just as often to national solidarity as to family, community, generational and intergenerational solidarity. A nation that espouses solidarity is the basis for greater social cohesion and national unity.

4. See <<http://www.ilo.org/public/french/region/afpro/yaounde/download/declarationdeyaounde.pdf>>.

5. The National Policy on Social Protection of Burkina Faso, September 2012, p. 33.

Box 1. Formalizing social protection in the constitutions of West African States

- Benin: The Constitution of 11 December 1990 mentions social security in its article 98: “The law determines the fundamental principles ... of the right to work, of social security, of the right to organize and the right to strike ...”
- Burkina Faso: The Constitution of 2 June 1991 has set out social protection for all Burkina Faso citizens in general and for vulnerable populations in particular: “Article 8: Education, instruction, training, work, social security, housing, sport, leisure, health, protection of maternity and of the child, assistance to the elderly or the disabled and to social cases, artistic and scientific creation, constitute social and cultural rights recognized by the present Constitution, which aims to promote them”; “Article 20: The State ensures the constant improvement of working conditions and protection for the worker (articles 4, 18, 20, 23 ...)”.
- Côte d’Ivoire: Social protection is not mentioned explicitly in the Constitution of Côte d’Ivoire but the National Social Protection Strategy is based first and foremost on the constitutional provisions and national priorities set out in the National Development Plan. The Constitution of 1 August 2000 proclaims, in its preamble, its adhesion to the rights and liberties as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and in the African Charter of Human and Peoples’ Rights of 1981, which includes the recognition of the right to social security and more broadly to social rights for the protection of the individual.
- Ghana: Article 17 of the Constitution of 1992 opens the way to policies and programmes aimed at correcting social, economic or educational imbalances in Ghanaian society.
- Mali: Article 17 of the Constitution of 12 January 1992 of Mali stipulates that “[e]ducation, instruction, training, work, housing, leisure, health and social protection constitute recognized rights”.
- Niger: The Constitution of the Seventh Republic of Niger of 25 November 2010 stipulates that “[t]he State has the duty to provide assistance to the most vulnerable groups through a policy of social protection”. Furthermore, it “mentions the exercise of collective and individual rights and well-being among the fundamental values of society, and advocates provisions offering safeguards to rights regarding social protection in several areas.”¹
- Nigeria: The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria mentions neither social protection nor social security, but, in article 16 b, provides that the State shall control the national economy in such a way as to ensure a maximum of “*welfare*”, liberty and happiness for each citizen on the basis of social justice and the equality of status and opportunity.²

Box 1. Continued

- Senegal: Does not mention social protection in its Constitution.
- Mauritania: “The [Mauritanian] Constitution of 1991 (amended in 2006) affirms economic and social rights and, in its article 16, stipulates that “The State and society protect the family”. The ratification by the State of international human rights conventions also reflects this spirit. In this sense, social protection becomes a social pact between the State with its rule of law and its citizens, supported through measures adequate for its implementation as a sign of good governance”³
- Togo: The Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Togo provides in article 13 that “[t]he State has the obligation to guarantee the physical and mental integrity, the life and security of all persons living on the national territory”. In article 50 it provides that “[t]he rights and duties laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in international conventions on human rights, ratified by Togo, are an integral part of the present Constitution”. In this respect, the Constitution of Togo endorses the provisions of Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guarantees the right to social security and of Article 25 which recognizes the right of all persons to a sufficient standard of living to ensure their health, their well-being and that of their families, particularly for necessary medical care and social services, and the right to security in case of unemployment, illness, invalidity, widowhood, old age or in other cases of loss of the means of subsistence as a result of circumstances beyond a person’s control. Mothers and children have the right to help and to special assistance. Articles 34, 35 and 37 of the Constitution of Togo follow this same logic stipulating that the State recognizes: “the citizens’ right to health. It works to promote it”; “the right to the education of children and creates favourable conditions to this end”; “the right to work and strives to create conditions in which this right may be enjoyed”⁴

Notes:

¹ National Social Protection Policy of the Republic of Niger, final version, August 2011, p. 26.

² “(b) Control the national economy in such manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity”, article 16 b, Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999.

³ National Strategy of Social Protection in Mauritania, p. 21.

⁴ National Social Protection Policy of Togo, provisional document of 6 July 2012, p. 17.

In addition to solidarity, national visions are based on other shared common values such as:

- Equity, social justice and dignity;
- Prevention of risks/shocks and protection against vulnerabilities;
- Economic, social and human development: States opt for sustainable economic development thanks to the development of human capital;
- The struggle against poverty and exclusion;
- Social well-being, improved living conditions;
- Good governance;
- An approach based on human rights.

The definition of social protection in West African countries

There is no universal definition of social protection. Social protection is defined in several ways that have evolved over time. Each country gives the term its own interpretation and emphasis according to priorities and national policies.⁶

The definition that emerged from the analysis of the national social protection documents is that, in general, social protection encompasses a whole range of public investments and public or private initiatives, both formal and informal, aimed at directly addressing risks, vulnerability and chronic poverty. The term “social protection” often has a wider meaning than “social security” and mainly encompasses mutual protection for members of a family or a community. Social protection covers both contributory schemes (schemes where beneficiaries contribute in part, such a social security schemes linked to work, social insurance systems of mutual health funds) and non-contributory schemes (where social transfers in cash or in kind are made to beneficiaries without any contribution on their part). It is primarily a response through mechanisms seeking to reinforce the capabilities of individuals and groups to meet the needs of everyday life and as a

6. ILO definitions, cf. ILC (2011, p. 9).

Social protection: The term “social protection” often casts a wider net than that of “social security” (and covers in particular the mutual protection of members of a family or a community). The expression is also used in a narrower sense in certain contexts (in such cases it only denotes programmes aimed at the poorest or most vulnerable or those excluded from society). “Social protection” and “social security” are often used interchangeably, which is regrettable. In the present article, for the sake of pragmatism, the terms “social protection” will refer to that protection offered by social security systems against social risks and needs.

Social security. The idea of social security chosen by the ILO covers all benefit programmes, in cash or in kind, aimed mainly at providing protection against loss of work income or insufficient income from work, for one of the following reasons: illness, invalidity, maternity, occupational accident or illness, unemployment, old age, death of a family member; – lack of access to health care or where health care is unaffordable – insufficient family support, particularly for children or adults in care; – poverty and social exclusion in general. Social security schemes can be contributory (social insurance) or non-contributory.

means to break down economic as well as social barriers that limit their access to services and the benefits of development.

Social protection is a right guaranteed by the majority of international human rights conventions starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), which guarantees the right to social security (Article 22), to a decent job (Article 23) and a sufficient living standard (Article 25). “For those excluded, the absence of social security constitutes the denial of a fundamental human right and makes the fight against poverty more difficult” (Bailey, 2004, p. 3).

In operational terms, social protection is made up of two key elements, which are found in almost all of the national social protection strategy (NSPS) documents of the countries in the study.

- **Social assistance** (or social safety nets): social safety nets are direct transfer programmes, in cash or in kind, non-contributory, regular and predictable, targeting poor or vulnerable individuals (individuals incapable of meeting their own basic needs or persons at risk of falling into poverty because of external shocks or socio-economic circumstances, such as age, illness, disability or discrimination) and which aim at increasing their consumption directly or their access to basic social services. Social assistance acts as a safety net.

- **Social insurance** (or social security systems): social insurance resembles state-organized not-for-profit statutory contributory schemes that allow households and individuals to protect themselves against a variety of capacity losses, to avoid falling into debt and to smooth consumption over time. Social insurance has a redistributive and protective role covering the risks included in ILO Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) (medical care, illness, unemployment, old age, occupational accidents and illnesses, families, maternity, invalidity, death). The main role is income maintenance.

The two elements are completed by at least two other components from the following four:

- **Social services** (for marginalized groups): all basic services (health, education, housing . . .) that enable people the possibility of moving out of poverty and to move up in society, that offer better opportunities to a maximum of individuals.

- **Social equity measures** (or protective legislation): the codification of social rights is the indispensable foundation for any social protection system. The individual’s right to protection against risks must be the object of appropriate legislation and mechanisms are needed to ensure effective application of this protective legal framework. Protective legislation also addresses power imbalances which create or maintain vulnerability for individuals or marginalized groups, mainly through anti-discrimination measures.

- **General price subsidies for certain foods and/or fuels**
- **Public or private health risk coverage mechanisms**

It is noted that for certain States in the sub-region, social protection has a narrower application and refers only to programmes aimed at the poorest, the most vulnerable or those excluded from society. For example, Ghana in its NSPS targets only the most vulnerable members of its population with its Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Program.⁷ Similarly, the African Union's definition of social protection is restrictive and refers to a range of protective public measures provided by the State and other actors as a response to unacceptable levels of vulnerability and poverty aimed at guaranteeing a restoration of human rights where these are faced by negative risk impacts "in those segments of the population that are incapable of providing for themselves through no fault of their own".

In such cases, priority is given to social assistance, and the income maintenance function of social security is left to one side. In order to set up full social protection schemes it is not possible merely to stop at a minimum level of protection (assistance to the most vulnerable groups), it is necessary to take into account those risks/shocks that can affect all and which occasion high expenditure (such as, for example, treatment in connection with an illness), and a lowering or even loss of normal income (for example, loss of employment or being unable to work). These risks are unemployment, illness, medical treatment, maternity, old age, occupational accidents and illnesses, family and disability, but also the death of the main provider for a family.

Taking the various national definitions and visions into account, the ten countries studied agree on the three main points as laid down by the ILO, namely:

- **Social protection is a universal human right:** "Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security", under Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- **Social protection is a social necessity:** Effective national social security systems are powerful tools to ensure income security, to prevent and reduce poverty and inequality and to promote social inclusion and dignity. They improve access to health care, ensure income security, facilitate access to education and combat child labour, particularly by eliminating its worst forms. Social security reinforces social cohesion and thus contributes to building social peace, inclusive societies and a fair globalization ensuring decent living conditions for all.
- **Social protection is an economic necessity:** Full productive employment and decent jobs are the most important factor in income security. Sustainable growth requires good health as well as appropriate nutrition and education so as to favour the move from low-production activities and subsistence activities to decent jobs that are more productive and from the informal economy to the formal economy. Social security improves productivity and employability and contributes to

7. "Social protection consists of a set of formal and informal mechanisms directed towards the provision of social assistance and capacity enhancement to the vulnerable and excluded in society" (National social protection strategy of Ghana, 2007, p. 8).

economic development. An adequate social security system encourages investment in human capital both for employers and workers alike.

The principles

The national social protection policies are based on guiding principles identified by each State from among international best practices as a function of national priorities, values and visions. With sustainability and effectiveness in mind, the West African States have based their interventions and policies on the following guiding principles:

- **Solidarity** stands out in national visions as the central element of any national social protection policy. In most cases, solidarity is seen as a duty of the community towards the poorest and most vulnerable; it is necessary to maintain and reinforce social cohesion. “Society, and more particularly those finding themselves in a more wealthy or advantageous situation, have the obligation to provide help to the poorest, the sick and those victims of shocks, catastrophes and violations of rights, especially through mechanisms for redistribution through taxation and public finances.”⁸ The various national documents make mention of mutual aid within the community, a principle deeply rooted throughout all of West Africa, but also of those aid mechanisms provided for under Islam in the case of Mauritania.

- **Universality of protection, an approach based on universal human rights** particularly the right to social protection and **the principle of equity**, in the context of a true social contract between the State and its citizens. “Each person has the right to social assistance under those conditions provided for by law taking account of their aspirations and their fundamental needs independently of their religious and political affiliations, their social status and their gender. Human beings being equal in principle, discriminations based on these factors are unacceptable. It is for society to take account of these differences by adopting appropriate measures and tolerant and constructive measures.”⁹ The ten West African States include the dimension of gender in their national policies to combat the discrimination of women, who are more affected by poverty and more vulnerable to social risks than men.

- **Participation and social dialogue.**

- **Partnership:** “Actors from the public and private sectors, from civil society as well as bilateral and multilateral partners must work in synergy for the organization and development of social services.”¹⁰

8. National Social Protection Strategy of Côte d’Ivoire, provisional version, 14 February 2013, p. 20.

9. National Actions Plan for the Extension of Social Protection 2010–2014 of Mali, draft 3, May 2010, p. 11.

10. National Actions Plan for the Extension of Social Protection 2010–2014 of Mali, draft 3, May 2010, p. 11.

- **The principle of non-discrimination** according to gender, age, ethnicity and nationality. Most of the NSPS also include approaches for gender and children and take account of their specific needs. For example,

“the social protection strategy [for Mauritania] takes account of the various vulnerabilities which may present themselves across the life course. It pays particular attention to questions relative to the well-being of children having regard to the extent of their vulnerability, compared with adults. It also promises fairness and equality in terms of gender taking the specific vulnerabilities of women into account.”¹¹

- **Transparency and good governance** through mechanisms guaranteeing the correct management of public and private resources that have been mobilized as well as the keeping of proper accounts thus giving confidence to all actors in the system.¹²

- **Subsidiarity and support for the process of decentralization** in the case of Niger:

“According to the essential principles of good governance, support for the policy of State decentralization and devolution implies above all that actors and ‘networks’ of various actors assume responsibility for their actions. Thus, under the principle of subsidiarity, the entire process of planning and implementation of activities becomes the responsibility of the level closest to the base due to its comparative advantage (a higher authority only intervening if the lower authority cannot act effectively or does not have the means to act).”¹³

- **Progressive implementation** giving priority to the most serious risks and the most vulnerable population groups. The approach must be sustainable, lasting and effective.

- **Taking account of the informal sector.**

Broad objectives

The broad objectives of national social protection policies aim generally at reinforcing existing social protection systems and progressively extending contributory and non-contributory schemes so that all workers may benefit from social protection and that all social risks are covered. National policies also mention as an aim the reinforcement of the capacities of the most vulnerable population groups and of help offered to those population groups to better manage risks.

11. National Strategy for Social Protection in Mauritania, final version, January 2012, p. 22.

12. National Social Protection Strategy of Côte d’Ivoire, provisional version, 14 February 2013, p. 20.

13. National Social Protection Policy of the Republic of Niger, final version, August 2011, p. 27.

Directions

The social protection policies or strategies of the ten countries in the sub-region are organized around four or five strategic directions covering several areas. These generally emerge from the current status of social protection and the diagnosis of the main risks and vulnerabilities in each country. They correspond to national priorities and are often linked to specific objectives in the documents dealing with the fight against poverty.

The directions that occur most frequently in policies are the following:

- **Social assistance and promoting vulnerable groups.** One direction that appears in almost all policies is the one in connection with developing safety nets, giving priority to support and social action for protecting the most vulnerable individuals and guaranteeing access for all to basic social services (education, health, water, housing). Particularly in the health sector, this direction aims at putting Universal Health Cover in place, progressively expanding population coverage.

- **Extending the field of application for social security structures and staff.** Another common direction across the various texts aims at developing social insurance through consolidating and enlarging contributory social protection systems, which are currently limited to a small minority of workers in the formal sector of the economy. This direction aims at consolidating the achievements of the various social security funds and extending social security to the informal sector through the extension of coverage to all socio-occupational risks and developing shock prevention mechanisms. Extending social security goes hand in hand with promoting decent jobs for all workers and reinforcing employability.

- **Institutional reinforcement.** By its cross-cutting nature, social protection is multi-sectoral involving different ministries, national bodies, international institutions, NGOs, private and public, local and regional actors, all of which carries with it the risk of a dispersal of efforts and a lack of synergies across programmes in a context of weak organizational capabilities, particularly as regards coordination. Most of the States are therefore aiming to make the institutional architecture for social protection more coherent through rationalizing mandates, reinforcing coordination mechanisms across policies and programmes, reinforcing collaboration between the various structures, better devolution and transfer of certain competences to local actors (for a better geographic distribution to reach even the most remote regions). More generally this direction promotes good governance and aims at reinforcing capabilities, particularly through setting up information management systems and monitoring and evaluation tools. Another vital element in this direction is the reinforcement of social protection financing and expenditure efficiencies (addressed in more detail below).

• **Food security and nutrition.** This direction is specific to the policies for Mauritania and Niger that are confronted by environmental risks and significant climate change, which impact food security for their populations. It should be noted that this direction is similar to the objective labelled “managing catastrophes and major risks” found in the National Strategy of Senegal.

Implementation

To compare implementation tools for national policies, three aspects are examined: the institutional framework, monitoring and evaluation tools, and follow-up measures.¹⁴

Institutional framework for implementation

Most of the States in the study commence on the basis of the cross-cutting nature of social protection, i.e. the multi-sectoral nature of social protection strategies or policies involving more than one ministry (in the absence, as is often the case, of one specific ministry for social protection) and other public and private actors (social insurance institutions, mutual funds, NGOs and international bodies). The States are conscious of the lack of coordination and shared vision in formal mandates and missions and are highly critical of the overlaps and duplication that compromise the efficiency of political choices and resource allocation, as well as the impact on the categories of vulnerable persons targeted. To address these problems they are aiming to reinforce the institutional framework and coordination between the various actors so that strategies to extend social security are included in national plans (for social and economic development) to facilitate their implementation. The cross-cutting nature of social protection requires the putting in place of a robust institutional system of structures and bodies with roles and mandates that are specific and complementary at the same time.¹⁵

There are several models for social protection coordination. The institutional framework chosen will depend on the national context, the actors in place and the mechanisms already in existence in the States of the sub-region. Not all countries are at the same stage in setting up institutional and coordinating arrangements. Some, such as Mauritania, are in the process of carrying out a feasibility study on arrangements for steering, coordinating and evaluating programmes, and are looking to capitalize on similar experience in neighbouring countries.

14. The authors have not found information on social protection policy implementation for Benin and Ghana.

15. National Social Protection Policy of the Republic of Niger, final version, August 2011, p. 51.

While coordination arrangements vary from one country to another, three types of approach, which are more or less structured, can be identified: a permanent inter-ministerial structure (sometimes with a permanent secretariat), specialized technical structures. and regional, sub-regional and/or local structures.

A permanent inter-ministerial structure. Entailing a permanent coordinating body, generally attached to or presided over by the Office of the Prime Minister or President and including the main ministries concerned with social protection, social protection institutions, the leader of any study group on social protection from among technical and financial partners and also, in most cases, civil society, the social partners (workers' trade unions and employers' organizations), decentralized communities and concerned NGOs.

The name of this body differs from one country to another: in Burkina Faso, it is the National Council for Social Protection (NCSP); in Niger, the Concerting Body for Social Protection Actors (CBSPA); in Mali the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee for National Policy and National Action Plan (NAP); in Nigeria the National Social Protection Council; in Togo, the National Committee for the Promotion of Social Protection (NCPSP); in Côte d'Ivoire, the Inter-ministerial Committee for Social Protection. In Mauritania and Senegal there is a body called the Steering Committee, which, in Mauritania's case, is provisional (there is a proposal in the NSPS to carry out a feasibility study on a steering, coordinating and follow-up/evaluation body for the NSPS). In Senegal's case a Delegation on Social Protection and National Solidarity (DSPNS) attached to the President's Office was created in 2012 and chairs the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee of the NSPS which involves the ministries concerned with social protection, employers' organizations, trade unions, civil society actors and representatives from local communities.

Although the inter-ministerial body's functions may differ slightly from one country to another, its main role is generally to coordinate policy or strategy at a political level and give general guidance on policy implementation. It meets at least once a year. Recognition for these inter-ministerial bodies takes time to build and requires considerable work in defining roles and responsibilities, communication and political leadership.

In certain States there is a permanent secretariat (or technical committee) supporting this inter-ministerial structure to ensure its effectiveness. This is the case of the Permanent Secretariat of the National Council for Social Protection of Burkina Faso; of the Permanent Secretariat of Côte d'Ivoire, which is the NSPS executive body charged with day-to-day co-ordination tasks; of the Permanent Commission of Togo, which is the permanent implementation monitoring body for the NSPS and the National Committee for Promoting Social Protection; and of the Technical Committee at the Inter-ministerial Steering Committee of the NSSP in Senegal.

Technical structures. Technical implementation and monitoring bodies for each social protection policy direction.

- Côte d'Ivoire: Four technical subject committees are to be charged with coordinating and monitoring implementation for the four directions in the National Strategy. These committees will comprise representatives of ministries directly concerned with the relevant directions as well as subsidiary agencies, NGOs and technical and financial partners acting in the relevant areas. Each technical committee will meet at least twice a year. They will be responsible for the annual updating of that section of the Action Plan relative to their respective direction (with support from the Secretariat) and reviewing progress against indicators relative to the direction as part of monitoring and evaluation activities.

- Burkina Faso: Special inter-ministerial units have been created in the ministerial departments in charge of each component of the National Social Protection Policy. There are two units: the specialized unit in charge of social safety nets and the specialized unit in charge of social insurance. Placed respectively under the authority of the Secretary General of the department in charge of social action and that for work and social security, these inter-ministerial units are charged with implementing programmes that concern them and producing annual implementation reports. They must also ensure the implementation of cross-cutting programmes;

- Mali: The Technical Commission for monitoring/evaluating policy and the national action plan and Subject sub-committees are responsible for planning social protection programmes. For example, for social safety nets, to define the type, role, outreach and frequency of instruments to be used in order to respond to needs;

- Niger: The CBSPA has recently set up eight study groups on: Implementation of the institutional framework and coordinating mechanism for the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP), Implementation of the Concerting Body for Planning and Introducing the NSPP, Universal Health Coverage (UHC) organization, Proposal for convergent and complementary targeting, Monitoring and evaluation of the NSPP implementation, Finance, Technical assistance implementation and Communication;

- Nigeria: The National Social Protection Working Committee will act as a think tank on policy, it will carry out overall monitoring and evaluation, policy revisions and coordinate the various actors;

- Togo: The National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) technical committees carry out monitoring for social protection programmes and provide provide data for the production of periodic reports by the NSPP Technical Secretariat.

Regional, sub-regional and/or local structures. Across the ten countries, with the two exceptions of Côte d'Ivoire and Mali, there are a number of distinct initiatives

to decentralize administrative functions and to improve the proximity of social protection to local populations.

- Burkina Faso: The regional social protection units are tasked with:
 - providing synergies between the sector plans of the various actors to avoid duplication of effort;
 - contributing to ensure that social protection is taken into account when preparing the regional development plan;
 - producing implementation reports;
 - collecting data and passing it upwards on monitoring and evaluation indicators;
- Côte d'Ivoire, Mali: No regional structure mentioned;
- Niger: Regional Committees on Development Strategy and Poverty Reduction and sub-regional and local committees;
- Nigeria: Nigeria is a federal state, there are therefore three levels: federal, state and local. Structures at the federal level will be replicated at the state level: State Social Protection Council, State Social Protection Technical Working Committee. At the community level, Nigeria plans on involving governance structures in providing social protection services in local government areas. The policy also provides for seeking the support of local communities for an effective implementation of programmes and a reinforcement of community confidence in collective action. Provisions give priority to the use of existing local structures. Traditional community leaders must take responsibility within their communities for coordinating social protection.¹⁶
 - Mauritania: “Regional and local coordination structures shall integrate existing cooperation frameworks, in particular Regional Development Committees chaired by *walis* (governors) and Departmental Development Committees chaired by *hakems* (prefects) as well as municipal councils”;
 - Togo: At devolved level, regional monitoring committees for the national social protection policy will be set up comprising representatives of devolved structures and members of the social protection sub-committee).
 - Senegal: There is no social protection regional committee but mutual health funds at district and village level are viewed as the main entrance points for State intervention measures for social protection and therefore play a public-service role.

“The state will introduce a reform making membership of a mutual health fund obligatory to obtain access to subsidized social protection services. . . . Mutual health funds will be structured at regional level and will draw up contracts with service providers (Social Security Fund – CSS; Social Insurance Institute for Old-Age Pensions in Senegal

16. National social protection Policy of Nigeria, draft, October 2013.

– IPRESS; health centres; hospitals; pharmacies; insurances). The State shall put in place a promotion and support agency for mutual health funds providing support, follow-up and advice.”¹⁷

Monitoring and evaluation mechanism

As the National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) for Togo points out, success in implementing the national social protection strategy is based on effective and regular monitoring and evaluation systems and periodic reports (annual or more than one per year); these two elements allow policy application and priority programme execution to be monitored and results to be measured in the various sectors and necessary adjustments to be made as efficiently as possible as the socio-economic situation develops to respond optimally to the specific vulnerabilities of population groups.¹⁸ As regards results-based policy management, the States are at pains to have adequate instruments available for measuring progress with indicators that are pertinent, consensual, reliable and available.

Most often monitoring and evaluation systems are put in place by States from basic data with strategic policy directions as objectives; steering such a system involves all the main actors concerned.

Niger relies on existing systems to set up its monitoring and evaluation mechanism, basing it on the monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Document and also taking account of systems in the sectors concerned.

Accompanying measures

The successful implementation of national social protection systems depends on the institutional and technical capacity of the implementing structures but also to a large degree on the setting up of appropriate accompanying measures such as targeting mechanisms and information management systems. Such accompanying measures are actually present in the documents of Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Togo and Côte d’Ivoire.

Reinforcing institutional and technical capacities of implementation structures.

It is vital to have well-equipped facilities with qualified and competent staff, particularly in the health sector, in order to be able to have an effective and efficient social protection system. In effect, the Côte d’Ivoire strategy emphasizes that the range and quality of social services are necessary for the success of targeted free

17. National Social Protection Strategy of Senegal, p. 100.

18. National Social Protection Policy of Togo, provisional document of 6 July 2012, p. 38.

measures and the construction of Universal Health Coverage. Togo's social protection policy favours identifying needs for technical capacity reinforcement with regard to social protection and designing and implementing a plan for training at all levels.¹⁹

Targeting. Designing schemes and programmes takes account of a choice between universal benefits and targeted benefits. This choice is based on the context of the guarantee, its objectives and the effectiveness of the relation between investment costs and the real impact on target groups. In terms of the fight against poverty focusing on poor individuals and households, and in a context of scarce budget resources, targeting makes it possible to improve the return on investments in social protection.

However, targeting is only possible if it is based on indicators that are pertinent, consensual and available and on mechanisms that are reliable for identifying the poorest and most vulnerable target groups. In this context, one of the essential elements for implementing social protection policy consists of defining, installing and implementing mechanisms for identifying and monitoring individuals and households to target as directly as possible in their favour those social protection measures meant for them. To identify vulnerable population groups, the targeting that each State carries out is geographical as well as social. Once robust population data is collected, the State can select priority options and implement progressively the social protection system.²⁰

Developing information management systems. The mechanism for targeting is linked to procedures around the registration of beneficiaries for social protection programmes, the computerized management of data on these beneficiaries, and appropriate referencing to one programme or another. Côte d'Ivoire policy on this point is particularly clear and advanced. The aim is to provide each beneficiary with a unique number and to issue them with an electronic card that will be accepted by each of the services concerned and which identifies the programmes for which they have eligibility. This information management registration and identification system must be closely linked to the reform of the register of marital status and improvements in the recording of births.²¹ It should therefore be noted that information management system development and reinforcement of the register of marital status are vital given the importance of proof of identity for access to services.

19. National Social Protection Policy of Togo, provisional document of 6 July 2012, p. 35.

20. Some States have noticed that one of the drawbacks of targeting lies in the risk of stigmatization and aggravation of social divisions, which is why they advise paying particular attention to means and measures aimed at either reducing such effects or eradicating them.

21. National Social Protection Strategy of Côte d'Ivoire, provisional version, 14 February 2013, p. 56.

Creating an effective information management system leads to large gains in terms of programme management efficiency, reducing opportunity costs (time spent on parallel procedures) for beneficiaries. It calls for strong cooperation between the various government structures involved. Information systems also make it possible to monitor social programme conditionalities (school assistance, vaccination, marital status registration, incidence of child labour, medical visits, etc.).

Financing

“Expenditures necessary for financing social security systems constitute a long-term investment in men and women. Societies that do not invest in social security expose themselves to increased costs, such as costs linked to a shortage of healthy productive workers, economic insecurity and social exclusion” (ILO, 2012, p. 18).

Social protection’s weak profile makes analysing its budget difficult both in terms of expenditure and receipts. Analysing public expenditure on social protection is made difficult by social protection’s cross-cutting nature and by the fact that in most States budgetary data based on a functional classification of expenditure is absent. The concept of a budget for social protection is relatively recent and its delimitation still remains insufficiently precise. In the Mauritanian social protection strategy an attempt has been made to define social expenditure. In this regard, three criteria were taken into account: gratuities, paid work and cost recovery.

In the first instance, we focus on the source of finance for social protection and then we identify possibilities for expanding finance and rationalizing expenditure as set out in the national policies.

Source of finance for social protection: Public resources

The State as the main actor. The most widely used mechanisms by States to finance social protection expenditure are:

- meeting expenditure directly from the State budget;
- subsidizing public or parastatal enterprises to reduce or stabilize prices for certain staple goods (milk, sugar, rice, oil, gas, electricity, water);
- granting tax exemptions on goods considered to be essential by virtue of their sensitivity regarding the capacity of population groups to access them (sugar, medicines, wheat, oils);
- emergency programmes designed to respond to external shocks, such as a drought and a rise in import prices (for example, the national solidarity programme in Mauritania).

The policy documents of certain countries advocate the creation of funds to finance social protection: Burkina Faso's policy document mentions the creation of a national social protection fund fed from the State budget, the private sector, civil society and various other donors; Senegal has created a solidarity fund for payments in the case of disasters; Mauritania has a social solidarity fund; Niger advocates the "creation and revitalization of social investment funds (community funds, social assistance funds for the disadvantaged through grain banks, cooperatives, economic interest groups)".²² Furthermore, its policy states that the State must, in the short term, open a budget line specifically for social protection from 2012 onwards, with a revision of the Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy; in Mali the State is the first guarantor of social protection financing through the normal headings in the State budget and the social safety net.

Decentralized communities. These play an important role in financing in Mali and Burkina Faso.

Sources of social protection financing: Private resources

Contributory social protection. Enterprises, workers, households and other actors as contributors and taxpayers have to provide resources to invest in people through social security systems. There are also own resources generated by social security institutions and mutual organizations. It should be noted that households spend an important part of their resources on ante and post crisis mitigation strategies. States accept the need to redirect resources to prevention to meet the basic financing needs of social protection systems.

Technical and financial partners. States recognize that international cooperation can play an important role to help launch the process of extending the social protection "floor" and to create a national resource base to provide viable financing mechanisms. However, they argue that development aid must be in line with State priorities and directions with regard to social protection, coming as additional support to government efforts and the State budget. Particular attention was given by the States to the efficient and transparent management of the resources mobilized: they are planning effective resource management and monitoring tools.

Innovative financing mechanisms. The States have undertaken a variety of innovative initiatives to mobilize financial resources. These include para-fiscal measures and measures to mobilize financial contributions from overseas communities to aid victims of natural disasters (Togo, Niger).

22. National Social Protection Policy of the Republic of Niger, final version, August 2011, p. 34.

Extending finance and rationalizing expenditure

With a view to progressively building more complete social protection systems through an expansion of their field of application in terms of staff and equipment, the States covered here intend to extend public financing for social protection. Low-income countries, such as are the ten States in this study, are subject to significant budgetary constraints limiting the extent to which expenditure on social protection can be expanded, particularly in a context of strong competition for increased expenditure in other priority sectors. However, such constraints do not entirely rule out reorienting expenditure in this area. Essentially there are three sources of fiscal space to finance expansion in public spending on social protection in the medium and long term: redesigning public spending, i.e. reorienting a part of spending to provide better for priority government programmes, increasing tax receipts, and mobilizing aid.

- The States intend to redesign public spending to increase resources allocated to social protection.

- The States intend to rationalize spending and set priorities. One model is provided by Côte d'Ivoire's policy, which provides for a reallocation of resources within social protection itself: spending allocation will give priority to programmes and measures forming part of the social protection floor, given that these focus on the most serious risks and vulnerabilities. Taking budgetary constraints into account, there would be little justification for directing public resources, at least in the short or medium term, into subsidizing contributory systems, which mainly benefit better-off households in the formal sector. With regard to UMC, this approach means that public resources will be directed into financing exemptions from contributions for priority target groups (children younger than age 5, pregnant women, the old and the disabled and households in extreme poverty), rather than into general subsidies for premiums.²³

- States are seeking to reinforce spending efficiency: in several cases it is possible to make social protection spending more effective in terms of cost vis-à-vis effectiveness. For example, several programmes identified as social safety nets do not manage to reach the poorest individuals. Improved targeting increases their impact and reduces inequities. Furthermore moving general subsidies or humanitarian aid to rights-based social protection programmes encourages financial savings and improved results at the same time. For example, in Senegal the effective absence of social protection mechanisms for the poor had forced the government to adopt general subsidies that were costing 4 per cent of GDP.

- The States envisage moving from reactive mitigation strategies to preventive strategies. The fact that emergency situations gave rise to extremely expensive State

23. National Social Protection Policy of Côte d'Ivoire, provisional version, 14 February 2013, p. 60.

programmes with only short-term visions when such situations could have been better met through adequate social protection programmes based on risk prevention was frequently deplored in policy documents and particularly in the cases of Senegal and Mauritania. Mauritania is a particular case in point: the country's economic vulnerability to outside shocks and the structure of the economy itself meant that emergency programmes had regularly been put in place in recent years. Given the regularity of these programmes, Mauritania's strategy considers it reasonable that financing intended for such programmes responds to real needs among population groups and thus should be taken into account in the budget each year to meet the needs of the most vulnerable population groups.

"It is vital to strike a rational balance between the costs and advantages, in the short and long term, of social security systems for society" (ILO, 2012, p. 18).

The process of developing national social protection policies

For all the States involved, the process of developing a national social protection policy has been consultative, concerted and iterative, pursuing social dialogue and consensus. National forums for the development and validation of national social protection policies were organized to mobilize all national actors (including civil society). Mobilizing all national actors around the task of implementing a national strategy is vital for its success given that social protection is so wide and cross-cutting. Defining strategic partnership terms for the main technical, international and regional financial partners, including international and regional financial institutions, is also an important process to facilitate reaching objectives in this area and ensuring that the strategy is implemented in an integrated way.

Generally, the social protection development process adopted by the various countries passes through the following stages:

- a working group/committee is set up to monitor the development of the National Social Protection Plan (NSPP);
- a review is carried out of the current state of inequality, vulnerability and poverty, vulnerable population groups and the factors for their vulnerability (poverty, geographic location and type) are identified;
- a review is carried out of the current state of social protection and the options to extend that social protection;
- exchange and apprenticeship programmes in good practice at international level (revision and analysis of the literature and existing measures on and for social protection form a major part of NSPP development); defining priorities, targeting NSPP objectives and directions with consultations at local, national and international level;

- editing of a first draft;
- workshops to review and enrich the content of the first version;
- consultations with the sector managers for technical and financial partners, members of the monitoring committee and other partners and actors involved in the guidelines for each policy direction;
- revision of the NSPP document based on the comments received;
- presentation and validation of the final version at a national forum convened to validate the NSPP, bringing together national actors (from central and regional level), international actors (including civil society, technical and financial partners and associations) and finalization of the document;
- in certain cases, submission to the minister in charge of social protection or equivalent and to the Council of Ministers for adoption.

Expert technical support is to be provided throughout the process.

Conclusion

The West African countries have repeatedly recognized that the lack of access to social protection is a major obstacle to economic and social development. To remedy this, and recognizing the economic, social and political impact of social protection, they have embarked on a considerable effort to extend social coverage – a key objective of Dynamic Social Security.

This initiative translated into the development of national policy documents that clearly defined objectives and priorities for action in the construction of comprehensive social protection systems aimed at reducing poverty and inequality and contributing to inclusive socioeconomic development in a context of social justice.

A country's national social protection policy is the instrument that guides, in a coherent and coordinated way, all measures in the social protection field, and translates into an organized framework all action around the definitions, objectives, principles and directions laid down in that policy. The policies analysed in this article show that extending social protection is a vast undertaking requiring strategic planning that will make it possible to embark on progressive actions as laid down in the framework national policy directions and founded on an appropriate legal framework.

Success in implementing a social protection policy rests on a participatory development process and on the development of an institutional framework to provide guidance and functional execution with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Existing social security institutions are well placed to implement the policy since they possess proven expertise and a developed national infrastructure acquired as a result of administering existing social security schemes. No less important are the effective and regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that make it possible not only to monitor the carrying out of priority programmes

but also to measure results in the various sectors and make necessary adjustments. Finally, long-term financing for the policy is an essential and determining condition for implementing the policy.

Experience shows that there is a strong movement of mobilization among actors during the design and adoption processes of national social protection policies. The risk is that commitment fades once the policy has been adopted unless the State exercises its responsibilities in setting up institutional arrangements for implementation and financing. This situation leads to a series of uncoordinated measures on the part of State services and technical and financial partners which render the policy's directions obsolete. It is therefore necessary that the State continues to exercise its responsibility after the national social protection policy has been adopted and supervise the implementation of the institutional arrangements and financing for social protection.

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