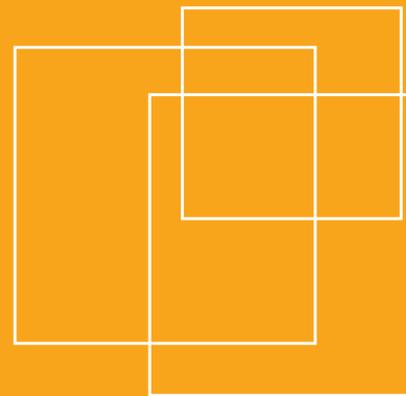


# 2<sup>nd</sup> African Decent Work Symposium 2010

“Building a Social Protection Floor with the Global Jobs Pact”

*06 - 08 October 2010*

*Palais des Congrès,  
Yaounde - Cameroon*



***Information Note***

# Background

1. The current financial and economic crisis has had profound effects on countries and large sections of Africa's populations. While economic recovery is taking shape<sup>1</sup>, the jobs crisis remains a matter of serious concern in many countries. Vulnerability in employment is on the rise, increasing by as much as 110 million between 2008 and 2009, with about 1.5 billion workers (half the world's workers) estimated to be in vulnerable employment.<sup>2</sup> To the ILO therefore, there will be no recovery without jobs recovery; hence the call for an employment-oriented framework for balanced and stable growth policies, implemented in an integrated way nationally and coordinated internationally.<sup>3</sup>
2. The crisis has reinforced the perception that the extension of social protection should be a high priority. It is estimated that globally, four out of five persons in the working-age population have no access to adequate social protection, lacking access to social security, health and unemployment assistance. In Africa, only about 10% of the labour force, principally those in the formal economy, are covered by statutory social security schemes, mostly old-age pensions. The large part of the excluded are found in the informal economy and amongst the poor and vulnerable populations of society. Yet extending social protection is an investment that has a very high return in terms both of poverty reduction and in raising the productive potential of the economy.
3. While in many developing countries social security systems were previously considered unaffordable, they are now regarded as important investments to support sustainable economic growth, particularly for the most vulnerable segments of the population and the least developed countries. Social protection is even more important now that the crisis threatens to roll back decades of investment in human development. A study by the ILO has shown that social protection benefits are a key mechanism to cushion low-income households against the impacts of the crisis.<sup>4</sup>
4. Research on the economic effects of social protection measures in OECD countries has demonstrated their effectiveness in cushioning incomes and supporting demand. In times of crisis, social security systems are playing an essential role as automatic counter-cyclical economic stabilizers by alleviating the fall in

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<sup>1</sup> According to the IMF's *World Economic Outlook* (July 2010 update), world growth is projected at about 4.5% in 2010 and 4.25% in 2011.

<sup>2</sup> ILO. *Global Employment Trends*. Geneva: January 2010.

<sup>3</sup> ILO. Report of the Director-General: *Recovery and growth with decent work*. Geneva: 2010

<sup>4</sup> *Accelerating a job-rich recovery in G20 countries: Building on experience* - An ILO report, with substantive contributions from OECD, to the Meeting of G20 Labour and Employment Ministers (Washington, DC, 20-21 April 2010).

aggregate demand.<sup>5</sup> Besides there is strong evidence that a social protection floor is affordable at virtually any stage of economic development.<sup>6</sup>

5. There is a legal base for the promotion of social protection: Several articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are related to the right to social security (article 22), right to education (article 26), right to health and well being including food, housing, medical care and necessary social services (article 25). Basic social protection is recognized as one of three measures for rapid poverty alleviation and broad based development, together with robust economic growth and rapid employment generation.<sup>7</sup>
6. At its 89th Session, the International Labour Conference (Geneva, June 2001) held a general discussion on social security. Subsequently the Conference adopted the Resolution and Conclusions concerning social security. Among its decisions was that “each country should determine a national strategy for working towards social security for all...closely linked to its employment strategy and to its other social policies.” Reaffirming that social security is an important tool to reduce poverty and to promote social and economic development, the Conference noted that the highest priority should be given to “policies and initiatives, which can bring social security to those who are not covered by existing systems”. Furthermore, the Conference urged the Organization to develop interagency collaboration, including with the International Social Security Association, the IMF and World Bank in promoting social justice and social solidarity through the extension of comprehensive social security. A call for a launch of a global campaign on social security and coverage for all was also made.<sup>8</sup>
7. The extension of social protection coverage is a strategic objective of the Decent Work Agenda. Taking cognisance of the lack of social protection for a vast majority of Africa’s peoples, the 11th ILO African Regional Meeting (Addis Ababa, April 2007), which adopted the “Decent Work Agenda in Africa, 2007-15”, agreed on the following target, progress towards which has to be assessed:-

*All African countries adopt coherent national social security strategies, including for the introduction or extension of a basic social security package that includes essential health care, maternity protection, child support for school-age children, disability protection and a minimum pension.*

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<sup>5</sup> *Protecting people, promoting jobs: An ILO report to the G20 Leaders’ Summit* (Pittsburgh, 24-25 September 2009).

<sup>6</sup> See for instance Behrendt C. and Hagemeyer K. *Can Low-Income Countries Afford Social Security* in “Building Decent Societies: Rethinking the Role of Social Security in Development”, edited by Peter Townsend. Geneva: ILO 2009.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> The Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All was formally launched in 2003. The Campaign focuses on the fact that there still remain many countries in the world where social security coverage is low or very low, particularly among those with low- and middle-income levels.

## Social Protection Floor: The Concept

8. The structural adjustment programmes, pursued by much of Africa over the 1980s and 1990s, sidelined social protection, with the assumption that growth would deliver social development. More recently, social development has regained impetus as a necessary output in its own right, epitomized in the Millennium Declaration, 2000 which was a combination of previous international agreements on social development in particular the World Social Summit on Social Development, 1995.
9. As a response to the global financial and economic crisis, the UN family developed a joint response, in the context of the “One UN”, by adopting common priorities and solutions. This was in recognition of the need for stronger coordinated action at the international level. The result was the adoption of nine Joint Crisis Initiatives by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB) in April 2009. They are:-
  - Additional financing for the most vulnerable
  - Food Security
  - Trade
  - A Green Economy Initiative
  - A Global Jobs Pact
  - A Social Protection Floor
  - Humanitarian, Security and Social Stability
  - Technology and Innovation
  - Monitoring and Analysis
10. The Social Protection Floor can be defined as “a certain minimum level of social protection, a set of basic social rights, services and facilities that the global citizen should enjoy.”<sup>9</sup> It is a global and coherent social policy concept that promotes national strategies for minimum level of access to essential services and income transfers for all.
11. The Social Protection Floor could consist of 2 main elements that help to realize these human rights – i) ensuring the availability, continuity, and geographical and financial access to essential services, such as water and sanitation, food and adequate nutrition, health, education, housing and other social services such as life and asset saving information; and ii) realizing access by ensuring a basic set of essential social transfers, in cash and in kind, to provide a minimum income and livelihood security for poor and vulnerable populations and to facilitate access to essential services. It includes social transfers (but also information, entitlements and

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<sup>9</sup> Global Extension of Social Security (GESS) – URL <http://www.ilo.org/gimi/gess/ShowTheme.do?tid=1321>

policies) to children, people in active age groups with insufficient income and older persons.<sup>10</sup>

12. Together with the World Health Organization, the ILO is a lead agency for the “Social Protection Floor”.<sup>11</sup> Cooperating agencies include the FAO, ILO, IMF, OHCHR, UN Regional Commissions, UNAIDS, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNRWA, WFP, WHO, WMO and the World Bank. As lead agency for the Social Protection Floor, the ILO Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia has since constituted a Social Protection Floor Advisory Group, which held its first meeting in Geneva on 11-12 August 2010, presided over by Ms. Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile.<sup>12</sup> Directors-General of the ILO and WHO are ex-officio members. The terms of reference for the Group include providing general guidance and catalyzing policy coherence to the work in this area. It will also promote the exchange of experiences, capacity building and implementation of the social protection floor concept according to different socioeconomic and institutional contexts at the global, regional, national and local levels. The group will also collaborate in the identification of good practices around the world and contribute to catalyze exchanges and cooperation across countries, including South-South cooperation.

## Employment and social protection: the interlinkages

13. As pillars of the Decent Work Agenda, employment and social protection are imperatively linked. While employment has to be full, decent, productive and freely chosen, social protection measures have to be in place both during the working cycle and after. Loss of gainful employment where there is no social protection means there will be no safety measures to cushion the effects of the income loss. With no recourse to adequate social protection one is left to fend for oneself, mainly in the informal economy, or in subsistence agriculture, none of which is able to pull one out of poverty as these are areas where decent work deficits prevail. Moreover employment finances social protection, which in turn is a guarantee against income loss. Therefore an integrated approach in the promotion of employment and social protection is the preferred option.

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<sup>10</sup> *UN System Joint Crisis Initiatives* Note – URL <http://www.undg.org/docs/10783/UN-System-Joint-Crisis-Initiative-Resource-Guide.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> The ILO is also the lead agency for the “Global Jobs Pact”, with the following Cooperating Agencies: FAO, IMF, IMO, ITU, UN Regional Commissions, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WIPO, and the World Bank.

<sup>12</sup> The Social Protection Floor Advisory Group members are: Mr. Aurelio Fernández Lopes, Chair of the European Union Social Protection Committee (since 2007); Ms. Eveline Herfkens, Founder of the MDGs campaign, Executive Coordinator for the MDGs Campaign (2002-2008), Minister of Development Cooperation of the Netherlands (1998-2002); Mr. Kemal Dervis, Vice-Chair of the Brookings Institution (since 2009), Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (2005-2009) and Minister for Economic Affairs of Turkey (2001-2002); Ms. Margaret Wilson, Professor of Law and Public Policy, University of Waikato (New Zealand), Member and spokesperson of the New Zealand House of Representatives (2005-2008), Minister of Labour (1999-2005); Mr. Martin Hirsch, former High Commissioner for Active Solidarities against Poverty and for Young People of France (since 2007), former head of Emmaüs; Ms. Sudha Pillai, Secretary of the Planning Commission of India (since 2007), former Secretary of Labour and Employment, and Mr. Ebrahim Patel, Minister of Economic Development of South Africa, former spokesperson of the Workers Group in the Governing Body of the ILO.

14. Decent work provides a route out of poverty and social exclusion. However employment alone, without adequate social protection, is not enough to eliminate poverty among the most vulnerable groups in the long term; neither does it prevent those unable to work from falling back into poverty. The role of social protection is therefore to support employment and income generation as major instruments in the fight against poverty by permitting a reasonable degree of social protection.
15. The absence of social protection for a vast majority of Africa's population leaves them at the mercy of economic downturns. The most vulnerable in society are also the first to be affected by these shocks and their ability to escape poverty is considerably reduced as a result. Before the onset of the current financial and economic crisis, there were large deficits reflected in high rates of vulnerable employment and working poverty in most of the developing world.<sup>13</sup> There is now a general agreement on the fact that households accessing social protection are less affected by economic downturns and that the redistribution of wealth through social protection allows vulnerable households to continue contributing to the economy. Therefore employment has to be accompanied by social protection in order to enable one to exit the crisis and hence break out of poverty and vulnerability.
16. The need for the promotion of employment and social protection work in tandem has been explicitly re-affirmed in the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, adopted by the 97th Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, 10 June 2008) and the Global Jobs Pact adopted by the 98th Session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, 19 June 2009).
17. The 2008 ILO Declaration establishes a new foundation to promote and achieve progress and social justice through the four strategic objectives of the ILO through the Decent Work Agenda – employment, social protection, social dialogue and tripartism, and fundamental principles and rights at work. Moreover the Declaration emphasizes that the “four strategic objectives are inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive” and that “the failure to promote any one of them would harm progress towards the others.” Therefore the pursuit of the goal of extending social protection cannot be complete unless it is reinforced by employment, social dialogue, and rights at work.
18. On the other hand the Global Jobs Pact places employment and social protection at the centre of crisis response through two key decent work responses – “Accelerating employment creation, jobs recovery and sustainable enterprises”; and “Building social protection systems and protecting people”. International labour standards, social dialogue and a fair globalization are the other equally important ingredients of the recovery process. It calls on governments and workers' and employers' organizations to build “adequate social protection for all, drawing on a basic social protection floor including: access to health care, income security for the elderly and persons with disabilities, child benefits and income security combined with public employment guarantee schemes for the unemployed and working poor.” It further urges “the international community to provide development assistance,

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<sup>13</sup> The ILO's *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2010* estimates that 152 million young people, or about 28% of all the young workers in the world, worked but remained in extreme poverty in households surviving on less than US\$1.25 per person per day in 2008.

including budgetary support, to build up a basic social protection floor on a national basis.”

## The 2nd African Decent Work Symposium

19. The Symposium is a response to the tripartite decision taken at the 11th ILO African Regional Meeting (Addis Ababa, April 2007) to the effect that the ILO convenes an annual African decent work symposium bringing together key actors to address topical issues contained in the “Decent Work Agenda in Africa 2007–15”. In line with the above decision, the 1st African Decent Work Symposium on “Recovering from the crisis: the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact in Africa” was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from 1-2 December 2009, at which the “Roadmap for the Implementation of the Global Jobs Pact in Africa” was adopted. Moreover the Roadmap identified “Building a Social Protection Floor” as one of the “Key Elements of African Recovery Strategy”.
20. The Roadmap recommended that the Global Jobs Pact should be implemented at national level through the DWCPs. The “One UN” provides a major entry-point in as far as building national social protection floors (with the Global Jobs Pact) is concerned. On 22 April 2010, Mr. Juan Somavia and Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator wrote to their field offices on the joint work done by the ILO and UNDP on the Global Jobs Pact. In particular they pledged that “ILO and UNDP with the support of its constituents will cooperate to provide policy advice and expertise necessary to integrate the Global Jobs Pact within UNDP’s operational activities and policy support. Furthermore UNDP Resident Representatives and ILO Country Directors were asked to work with “national partners on a joint plan of action which addresses country specific employment and social protection needs, as identified within national development plans, existing UNDAF processes or the common country programme frameworks and joint programming initiatives”.
21. The Symposium will explore ways and means of ensuring that DWCPs give effect to the Global Jobs Pact through their priorities and strategies; and are formally negotiated and approved at the tripartite level and officially endorsed at the highest political level – Cabinet, Parliaments and Economic and Social Councils (where they exist).
22. Taking note of the interest raised by the Director-General’s Report to the 99th session of the International Labour Conference (Geneva, June 2010) on “Recovery and Growth with Decent Work”, the Symposium provides the forum to operationalize the “Resolution concerning the recurrent discussion on employment”, especially in taking stock of progress made in consolidating macroeconomic policy frameworks to promote full, decent, productive and freely chosen employment.
23. Preparation for the 2011 recurrent discussion on social security will be made at the Symposium. The key point to examine will be: *What strategies do African countries need to put in place to build a basic social protection floor and implement the Global Jobs Pact for the benefit of their populations?*
24. The Symposium will be in line with the Declaration, Plan of Action and Follow-up Mechanism adopted at the AU Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State

and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa (Ouagadougou, September 2004).

25. The Symposium will also be an opportunity for participants to take stock of progress in the implementation of the African Union Social Policy Framework, adopted in October 2008 in Windhoek Namibia. As a guide, the Social Policy Framework is intended to assist Member States, Regional Economic Communities, civil society, and community based organizations, among others, in the development of national social policies to promote human empowerment and development.

## Objectives of the 2nd African Decent Work Symposium

### Developmental objective

26. In order to allow African tripartite constituents to follow-up on the 2010 International Labour Conference conclusions on employment and prepare for the 2011 discussion on social security, the 2nd African Decent Work Symposium will aim at promoting employment and protecting people through the implementation of effective national social protection floors as an important link in the fight against poverty, an investment in socio-economic development as well as the consolidation of the economic recovery process on the continent.
  - The main objective of this regional activity is to strengthen the capacity of key actors and stakeholders to design and implement strategies to create productive employment and extend social protection, within the framework of the social protection floor and the Global Jobs Pact initiatives.

### Specific objectives

27. The specific Symposium objectives are as follows:-
  - To analyze the economic and social perspectives in Africa in the light of current global environment;
  - To review the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact in Africa through the Decent Work Country Programmes, and exchange experiences on international initiatives;
  - To analyze the social protection floor concept and initiative, its context, components and operational phases;
  - To understand the importance of the extension of social protection as a tool to reduce poverty and inequalities and contribute to economic growth and development;
  - To evaluate the potential and strategies of African countries to formulate and finance the extension of social protection for all; and

- To exchange experiences, identify success stories, and stimulate concrete regional, sub regional and national initiatives and programmes on the extension of social protection strategies.

## Format and Agenda

28. The Symposium will be an interactive forum for policy debate. Key policy responses identified above will be intensively discussed in plenary sessions and panels.
29. The Symposium will address the following topics:-
  - Prospects for Recovery: Growth, employment and development
  - Giving Effect to the Global Jobs Pact through the DWCPs in Africa
  - The UN Social Protection Floor initiative
  - Extending Social Security to All
  - The right to social security and the relevance of ILO instruments
  - The social security extension challenge: income security and health benefits
  - The financing and the governance challenges
30. In order to stimulate debate at the Symposium, the background documents will be prepared:-
  - Building a Social Protection Floor with the Global Jobs Pact
  - Employment-oriented Macroeconomic Framework and Challenges in Africa
  - The Social Economy: Contributing to Recovery, Growth and Decent Work
  - Country Briefs/Reviews

## Participation

31. The following will be invited:-
  - Ministries:-
    - Labour/Employment
    - Social Protection
    - Finance/Planning/Economy
    - Health

- Social Affairs
- National social security institutions
- Representatives of employers' and workers' organizations
- African Union's ECOSOCC, New Partnership for African's Development, Pan African Parliament, UN Economic Commission for Africa, UN agencies, AfDB, Regional Economic Communities
- World Bank and IMF
- Partner agencies and donors
- Non-governmental organizations engaged in social protection policy formulation
- Other international organizations and sponsors in the area of social protection

## Expected Outcomes

32. A set of Symposium Conclusions and a Declaration will be adopted, which will form the basis for follow up actions at the national, sub regional, regional and global levels.
33. A Symposium publication, in which will be included papers presented, speeches delivered, record of proceedings, Conclusions and Declaration, etc., will be prepared.
34. It is also envisaged that there will be increased commitment by African governments, social partners, as well as development actors to designing and implementing innovative employment and social protection strategies.

## Dates and Venue of the Symposium

35. The 2nd African Decent Work Symposium on "Building a Social Protection Floor with the Global Jobs Pact" will be held in Yaoundé, Republic of Cameroon from 6 –8 October 2010.

***Addis Ababa, August 2010***