

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 47th SESSION

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights (30 June 2021)

Mr. Olivier De Schutter, Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights:

During the session, two reports were presented:

1. Report on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights [A/HRC/47/36](#):
 - The report focuses on addressing **international solidarity in the service of poverty eradication**.
 - It argues that a **Global Fund for Social Protection (GFSP)** should be set up to increase the level of support to low-income countries, thus helping them both to establish and **maintain social protection floors in the form of legal entitlements**, and to improve the resilience of social protection systems against shocks. The report also shows **how this is affordable**.
 - In particular, it proposes a **roadmap for the establishment of the GFSP**, building on the already existing structures that have been developed on an ad hoc basis to provide support for the **universalisation of social protection floors**. The challenge now is to strengthen these structures in order to ensure they **work more effectively with one another**, and to **scale up the level of support while ensuring that such support** is also adaptive to **future shocks**.
2. Visit to the European Union [A/HRC/47/36/Add.1](#):
 - The SR visited different EU institutions from 25 November 2020 to 29 January 2021. The main conclusion from the report is that while the EU has launched a number of programmes to combat poverty, the Member States still encounter a number of obstacles to effectively address poverty and inequalities — **including unhealthy social and fiscal competition between countries and socio-economic governance frameworks that do not favour social investment**. However, it specifies that the economic recovery provides a **unique opportunity** for States to **rethink these constraints**.

Additionally, the SR highlighted that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic an **estimated 115 million additional people may have fallen into extreme poverty in 2020**, and **35 million more** may follow this year. Also, that social protection measures developed by States were mostly ad hoc and short term and because social registries were often out of date or incomplete, many people were left out. For **low-income countries**, an additional constraint is the **lack of fiscal space to invest in social protection**. These countries face the burden of high levels of debt, and initiatives such as the **G20's Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI)** are not the answer, since these countries fear that if they **seek debt restructuring**, they will be **poorly noted by rating agencies**.

Regarding the **financing** of the GFSP the SR emphasized that while international support is crucial, it should be seen not as a substitute for the mobilisation of domestic resources, but rather as an incentive to encourage recipient countries to **build capacity and to invest more in this area**. Social protection, then, should be seen as an **investment with potentially high returns**, since it leads to building human capital, has significant multiplier effects in the local economy, and contributes to inclusive growth and to resilience in times of crisis. Moreover, he emphasized that high-income countries will only deliver aid to **developing countries if they are pressured by civil society organizations and trade unions globally**.

Finally, the SR said that the HRC is now being given an opportunity to support what the SR sees as a major step towards the realization of the **right to social security as a human right**. He stressed that his fund proposal is there to help countries **in times of shock and to adapt to future shocks**. Also, that social protection should not be considered as the end result of development but should be considered as a **pre-condition of inclusive sustainable growth**. He mentioned the fund will be **established in June 2022** as there is a **clear mandate in the ILO** for it which will soon adopt an action plan.



Concerned delegation (The European Union):

The Delegation welcomed the report of the SR. It mentioned that **EU social policy** is in full compliance with the UN SDGs and the international human rights frameworks. That countries within the Union remain **independent** of choosing the **fundamental principles of their social security systems**. Also, that the EU as a whole **rank amongst the best performers in equality of income and social policies**. For the EU, poverty and exclusion are considered a **multidimensional phenomenon** as well as all its components. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the **EU issued unprecedented policy and founding measures to prevent massive unemployment and poverty**. The main EU policy to address extreme poverty, is the **European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan** and all countries have committed to implementing this plan and its targets. **Monitoring and multi-lateral surveillance** will take place regarding countries' national plans compliance. Finally, The EU mentioned that its institutions are willing to **discuss further the issues** examined in the SR's report.

Interactive Dialogue

Several countries mentioned that they support the **strengthening of international mobilization in favour of universal access to social protection** and concurred that this should be seen as both an **immediate response measure to the current crisis**, but also as a **strengthening of economic and social resilience, especially in developing and low-income states**. *France* was particularly concerned on how can it be ensured a good articulation and coordination of the proposed fund with existing initiatives, how can it **prevent the risk of "disincentives"** to mobilize national resources for social protection, and what is the **SR's assessment on the financial capacity of States and donors** to subscribe to this new project in a context of global budget restriction. *Mauritania, Mali, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malaysia, Senegal, Peru (on behalf of Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Paraguay, Uruguay)* particularly **expressed their support for the creation of a global fund for social protection** and recognized that the strengthening of protection floors is important to achieve the SDGs.

Egypt (on behalf of the Arab Group) called for strengthening cooperation between countries and international organizations to reduce the causes of extreme poverty, including **climate change** as well as the importance of **debt relief for developing countries, and cooperation in the field of money and asset recovery**. *China (on behalf of a group of countries)* called on States to attach greater importance to poverty eradication and enhance social protection in order to ensure that the development outcomes are **shared by all in a fairer way**. The international community should step up cooperation on poverty eradication, **in particular provide assistance to developing countries**. *China* furthered remarked that there are more than **40 million people living in poverty in the United States**, and **14 million people living in poverty in the United Kingdom**. Hence, the SR should **focus more on the situation of the poor in developed countries**. *Cuba* highlighted that the creation of global mechanisms to support the establishment of social protection floors should **not be established with conditions for developing countries**. It noted there are small countries that have made many efforts and have results in social protection, and not only do they **not receive support funds**, but they are subjected to **economic wars and unilateral coercive measures**. *Venezuela and Iran* concurred in that **illegal unilateral coercive measures** have disproportionately increased poverty and inequality in the peoples of the South and **lead them to hunger and disease**.

Algeria advocated for **diversifying and strengthening the sources of the fund** to offer protection to **middle- and low-income countries**. *Philippines* highlighted two needs: **thorough consultations and in-depth dialogues with all concerned sectors** to ensure that the fund will be responsive to sectoral concerns and **more technical and considered discussions on the fund's governance and management, structure, operational requirements, and mechanisms**. *Bangladesh* expressed the need to guarantee effective implementation of **Official Development Assistance (ODA)** commitments by **developed countries**. Also,



that the fund initiative needs to be **State-owned and State-led with contribution of all stakeholders**. **Bahamas** asked the SR to elaborate on ways for countries designated “**high income**” facing consistent economic and climatic shocks, **to access funding to further strengthen social protection systems**. **Pakistan** also asked the SR how political commitment would work around this fund and how would it operationalize effectively.

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (61 country delegations):

Egypt (On behalf of the Arab Group), Peru (on behalf of Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Paraguay, Uruguay), China (on behalf of a group of countries, Belarus, Eritrea), France, Sovereign Order of Malta, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Cuba, Senegal, Iraq, Armenia, Togo, Burkina Faso, China, Paraguay, France, Sovereign Order of Malta, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Ecuador, Cuba, Senegal, Iraq, Armenia, Togo, Burkina Faso, China, India, Morocco, Algeria, Venezuela, Egypt, Kenya, Nepal, Botswana, Namibia, Malaysia, Sudan, Pakistan, Belgium, Nigeria, Timor-Leste, Mali, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Philippines, Vietnam, Yemen, Panama, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Albania, Malawi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Bolivia, Cameroon, Djibouti, Bahamas, Iran, South Sudan.

Other observers: UNICEF: A **long-term perspective** should be taken with the aim to finance social protection systems that reduce and prevent poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion and increase national preparedness for future crises. **Domestic resource mobilization and national ownership are the cornerstones for sustainable and equitable financing** of social protection. The international community also has a key role to play, through **increased international cooperation and solidarity**.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (10):

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Consortium for Street Children, VIVAT International (Joint Statement), FIAN International e.V. (Joint Statement), Instituto Brasileiro de Analises Sociais e Economicas, International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, Rahbord Peimayesh Research & Educational Services Cooperative, Lutheran World Federation, Sikh Human Rights Group, Federatie van Nederlandse Verenigingen tot Integratie Van Homoseksualiteit - COC Nederland.

Several NGO representatives requested the Council to encourage global leaders to give careful consideration to the proposals of the SR and to make the **establishment of a Global Fund one of the main priorities of the international political agenda**. Also, they mentioned that social protection measures are often temporal and **leave out a number of minority groups**. As a result, many individuals have been **victims of joblessness, homelessness and discriminatory healthcare services**. Also, they mentioned that for social protection to address complex issues such as the **worst forms of child labour**, it is vital to consult with children, families and community members to integrate their concerns and solutions. Moreover, that the proposed Social Protection Fund augments the earnings of people employed in **low pay or low earning sectors such as small farms, crafts and semi-skilled occupations**.

Other NGOs referred to specific country cases: the poorest communities in **Bangladesh and Nepal** need social protection measures to protect families and their children against the consequences of poverty; in **Brazil**, it is fundamental to review labour and social welfare reforms, build a progressive tax system, implement a permanent Basic Income program, and **strengthen Brazil’s Social Welfare Unique System**.

Finally, NGO **Rahbord Peimayesh Research & Educational Services Cooperative** urged the SR to speak out for the **rights of people adversely affected by unilateral coercive measures (UCMs)** in targeted countries, and to **monitor the effects of them on extreme poverty** in targeted countries and report the findings to the Human Rights Council.

To watch full ID with the SR on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, refer to [UN Web TV](#)