

# Making the case for a **comprehensive, rights-based** notion of Social Protection

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Cairo, 14 May 2008

# UN Supports State Parties in Fulfilling Obligations to International Covenants

- The Universal Declaration on Human Rights
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- The Millennium Declaration (MDGs)
- Right to social protection enshrined in these covenants
- MDGs cannot be achieved without aggressive social protections

# International commitments revisited

- Global commitments to social protection in **Universal Declaration** (article 25):
  - ...”right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”
- Articles 20 and 26 of the **CRC**:
  - “State parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance...”

# International obligations imply a minimum social floor

- Basic and modest set of **social security benefits for all citizens**
  - Income security through basic, tax-financed, universal non-contributory pensions for older persons, persons with disabilities and those who lost the main breadwinner in a family
  - Income security for all children through child benefits
  - Some modest conditional support for the poor in active age (employment programmes, benefits),
  - Financing universal access to essential health care
- **Progressive realization of rights; targeting within universalism**

# Social Protection enhances growth potential: 'win-win'

- **Micro-level credit market failures inhibit growth**
  - Lack of insurance or credit markets lead poor farmers to make costly risk reduction decisions
  - Economic growth is stifled due to lack of risk taking and innovation in absence of safety net or insurance mechanism
- **Irreversible asset depletion lowers productivity**
  - Current productivity (repeated health shocks for prime age adults)
  - Future productivity (taking children out of school, reducing food intake)

# The 'win-win' of Social Protection

- **Inequality itself is bad for growth**
  - Greater conflict, more divisive society, less investment in public goods
  - Direct costs of inequality in crime, violence and investment climate
- **Macro policy and social protection**
  - Safety net allows for greater overall risk-taking and business innovation
  - Governments more likely to adopt high risk-high return policies (trade liberalization; elimination of subsidies)
- **Case for social protection**
  - can be made on economic efficiency and human rights principles
  - ought to be part of a national economic development strategy

# More than one strategy

- **Transformative**

- **Aim:** Change policies and attitudes

- **Examples:** regulation, sensitization campaigns, legal system, overall social policy

- **Promotional**

- **Aim:** Enhance earning capacity

- **Examples:** social security/insurance, pensions, child allowance, credit schemes, crop insurance

- **Preventive & Protective**

- **Aim:** Help avert deprivation & offer relief from deprivation

- **Examples:** feeding programmes, fee waivers, second chance education, early childhood development programmes, cash transfers, public works

**Issue: look at transformation and equity and empowerment, not only safety nets**

**Shokran**