

Social Protection Policies of International Organizations

Viljam Engström and Aliina Vegar

Institute for Human Rights Working Paper

No. 1/2021

Institute for Human Rights
Åbo Akademi University
Fänriksgatan 3
FI-20500 Åbo
Finland

<http://www.abo.fi/humanrights>

This work is licensed under [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

Social Protection Policies of International Organizations*

1. Introduction

Social protection is gradually growing into a shared vocabulary through which to address issues of global justice.¹ At the international level, a gradual movement can be discerned in the policy-making of international organizations in particular.² The financial and economic crisis of 2008 boosted interest in social protection policies, and global political support for the approach crystallized in 2009 with the adoption of the UN Social Protection Floor Initiative.³ The Sustainable Development Goals manifested the extension of social protection as key for reducing and preventing poverty.⁴

In the last 10–15 years in particular, international organizations have adopted social protection policies at an increasing pace. The aim of this working paper is to start mapping the scope of this development. The material presented here has been gathered mainly in early 2021 through systematic searches of databases of a set of organizations, as well as through social protection literature. The paper does not conduct qualitative analysis of the content and function of social protection policies.

In conducting searches, the term “social protection” has been used. It should be noted that the vocabulary in use in social protection discourse is not coherent, some institutions using the “social security” notion alongside and even interchangeably. Special emphasis is on the United Nations system, including UN specialized agencies, programs and funds. The material presented is not intended to offer an exhaustive picture of the social protection policy of a particular organization. The aim is rather to

* Viljam Engström (PhD, Adjunct professor) works as lecturer in public international law at Åbo Akademi University. Recent publications include for example, “The IMF and Protection of Vulnerable Groups”, in 89 *Nordic Journal of International Law* (2020). Aliina Vegar (PhD Candidate) works currently as a Legal Adviser for the New Zealand Government. In 2020–2021, she worked as a research assistant at the Åbo Akademi University Institute for Human Rights.

¹ As one author puts it, social protection has arisen with “meteoric speed” on the international agenda, A. de Haan, ‘The Rise of Social Protection in Development: Progress, Pitfalls and Politics’, (2014) 26 *European Journal of Development Research* 311, at 311.

² Noted already by B. Deacon, M. Hulse, and P. Stubbs, *Global Social Policy: International Organizations and the Future of Welfare* (1997).

³ [The UN Social Protection Floor Initiative](#) (accessed 16 August 2021).

⁴ UN General Assembly, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Doc. A/RES/70/1 (21 October 2015).

help find relevant sources for conducting such an analysis and to highlight some key elements.

For the sake of manageability and readability, an editorial choice was made to limit the space of each organization to a maximum of a one-page table. For many organizations this means that a vast amount of social protection material has been excluded. In such cases, material listed in the “other” column is intended to offer further examples of how social protection is present in policy-making. Also, as far as single instruments are concerned, the reader is advised to consult that instrument in its entirety for more information on the detailed content and function of a social protection policy. The material is presented chronologically. The order of presentation, in other words, is not indicative of the relative importance or normative nature of the instrument.

As the work done so far has aimed at identifying social protection policies of international organizations and the UN system in particular, many other actors are not included in this paper. As to the UN, Departments and Offices have not been systematically included. These can nevertheless be useful sources for studying social protection. The OHCHR, for example, adopts a human rights based approach to social protection (right to social security) and links to a vast amount of resources. It also participates in maintaining the webpage [Social Protection and Human Rights](#). UNDESA publishes the World Social Report (see in particular the *2018 Report on the World Social Situation*). Subsidiary bodies such as the Human Rights Council are also omitted from this working paper, although it has done work in the area (see e.g. A/HRC/28/35 Report on social protection floors and economic and social rights (2015)).

Perhaps needless to say — this is work in progress. All comments are welcome (viljam.engstrom@abo.fi).

2. List of Institutions Included

United Nations system

- Main UN bodies
 - General assembly
 - ECOSOC
- UN Specialized Agencies:
 - FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
 - ICAO: International Civil Aviation Organization
 - IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development
 - ILO: International Labour Organization
 - IMF: International Monetary Fund
 - IMO: International Maritime Organization
 - ITU: International Telecommunication Union
 - UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
 - UNIDO: United Nations Industrial Development Organization
 - UNWTO: World Tourism Organization
 - UPU: Universal Postal Union
 - WHO: World Health Organization
 - WIPO: World Intellectual Property Organization
 - WMO: World Meteorological Organization
 - World Bank (IBRD: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development)

- UN Funds and Programmes
 - UNDP: UN Development Programme
 - UNEP: UN Environment Programme
 - UNFPA: UN Population Fund
 - UN-Habitat: UN Human Settlements Programme
 - UNICEF: UN Children's Fund
 - WFP: World Food Programme
- Selected Other UN Entities
 - UNAIDS: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
 - UN-Women: UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Regional organizations

- AU: African Union
- EU: European Union

Financial institutions

- OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- AfDB: African Development Bank
- ADB: Asian Development Bank
- AIIB: Asian International Investment Bank

3. Inter-agency Initiatives

3.1. The One-UN Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPF-I)

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<p><i>Social Protection Floor for a Fair and Inclusive Globalization: Report of the Social Protection Floor Advisory Group (2011)</i></p>	<p>The Social Protection Floor approach is “an integrated set of social policies designed to guarantee income security and access to essential social services for all, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups and protecting and empowering people across the life cycle.”</p> <p>Core elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ basic income security, in the form of various social transfers (in cash or in kind), such as pensions for the elderly and persons with disabilities, child benefits, income support benefits and/or employment guarantees and services for the unemployed and working poor ▪ universal access to essential affordable social services in the areas of health, water and sanitation, education, food security, housing, and others defined according to national priorities <p>Design and implementation of national social protection floors should follow country-specific priorities. Defines a number of elements that should be taken into account.</p> <p>The SPF-1 Advisory Group suggests that governments and social partners adopt ILO SP recommendations, including implementing Recommendation No. 202.</p>
<p><i>Other:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SPF-I intergovernmental cooperation agencies: FAO, IMF, OHCHR, UN Regional Commissions, UNAIDS, UN-DESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNRWA, WFP, WMO and World Bank</i> • <i>Collaborating for policy coherence and development impact (2019)</i> • <i>Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPF-I) Factsheet (2015)</i>

3.2. Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B)

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>Collaborating for Policy Coherence and Development Impact (undated)</i>	<p>“Social protection is a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing and protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, throughout their life cycle placing a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups. This means ensuring adequate protection for all who need it, including children; people of working age in case of maternity, sickness, work injury or for those without jobs; persons with disability and older persons. This protection can be provided through social insurance, tax-funded social benefits, social assistance services, public works programs and other schemes guaranteeing basic income security and access to essential services.”</p>
<i>Other:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SPIAC-B intergovernmental cooperating agencies: ADB, AU, CEPAL, EC, FAO, IADB, IFAD, ILO, IMF, IPC-IG, ISSA, OECD, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNRISD, UNU, UN Women, World Bank, WFP and WHO</i> • <i>A Joint Statement on the Role of Social Protection in Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic (2020)</i> • <i>Inter-agency Social Protection Assessment (ISPA) tools (2016)</i> • <i>SPIAC-B Terms of reference</i> • <i>Social Protection to Promote Gender Equality and Women’s and Girls’ Empowerment</i>

4. Main United Nations Bodies

4.1. General Assembly

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>Sustainable Development Goals (2015)</i>	<p>“1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable”</p> <p>“5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate”</p> <p>“10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality”</p>
<i>Other:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>UN General Assembly Reports on Social Development (Annual)</i>• <i>Social Development Briefs</i>

4.2. ECOSOC

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>E/C.12/GC/19 General Comment No. 19, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2008)</i>	<p>“The right to social security encompasses the right to access and maintain benefits, whether in cash or in kind, without discrimination in order to secure protection, inter alia, from (a) lack of work-related income caused by sickness, disability, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, old age, or death of a family member; (b) unaffordable access to health care; (c) insufficient family support, particularly for children and adult dependents. ... Social security, through its redistributive character, plays an important role in poverty reduction and alleviation, preventing social exclusion and promoting social inclusion.”</p>
<i>E/CN.5/2011/8 Emerging issues: social protection (2010)</i>	<p>“Social protection measures act as cushions for individuals and families against economic shocks and other life contingencies, and enhance their capacity to manage and overcome the challenges that affect their well-being. These measures are therefore essential to reducing vulnerability, preventing the deterioration of living conditions and facilitating livelihood regeneration.”</p> <p>“Public social protection encompasses three main sets of measures: social insurance; social assistance, including universal tax-financed transfers; and protective labour-market regulations.”</p>
<i>Other:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>E/RES/2017/11 Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (2017)</i> • <i>E/RES/2016/8 Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world (2016)</i> • <i>E/RES/2010/12 Promoting Social Integration (2010)</i> • <i>UN Economic and Social Council, Enhancing Social Protection and Reducing Vulnerability in a Globalizing World, E/CN.5/2001/2 (2000)</i>

5. Social Protection Policies of UN Specialized Agencies

5.1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>Social Protection and Child Labour: Eliminating Child Labour in Agriculture with Social Protection (2020)</i>	“Social protection refers to the set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their lifecycles, with a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups”.
<i>Managing Climate Risks Through Social Protection: Reducing Rural Poverty and Building Resilient Agricultural Livelihoods (2019)</i>	<p>SP as an investment to safeguard the livelihood of small-scale producers and strengthen their essential role in ensuring food security across the globe.</p> <p>Outlines FAO’s “Cash+” approach to SP.</p>
<i>FAO Social Protection Framework: Promoting Rural Development for All (2017)</i>	<p>“... social protection comprises a set of policies and programmes that addresses economic, environmental and social vulnerabilities to food insecurity and poverty by protecting and promoting livelihoods”.</p> <p>SP vision: “People and communities living in rural areas, as well as those whose livelihoods depend on natural resources, are supported by social protection systems that contribute to: ensuring their food security and improved nutrition; protecting them before, during and after shocks and stresses; promoting resilient livelihoods and sustainable management of ecosystems; and stimulating pro-poor growth and inclusive rural development”.</p> <p>“FAO supports the Social Protection Floor Initiative, and therefore aims to promote social protection for all as a basic set of rights enabling all members of a society to access a minimum of goods and services”.</p> <p>SP interventions (“social assistance” or “social security”): Cash transfers; Child grants; Disability benefits; Health and social insurance; In-kind transfers; Pensions; Public works; Unemployment benefits. In addition there are policies that perform SP functions (e.g. transfers, subsidies), as well as Rural enablers (e.g. questions of access).</p>
<i>The State of Food and Agriculture (Social Protection and Agriculture: Breaking the Cycle of Rural Poverty) (2015)</i>	<p>Social protection includes three broad components: Social assistance; social insurance; labour market protection.</p> <p>Links social protection with agricultural development.</p>
<i>Other:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social Protection and Child Labour: Eliminating Child Labour in Agriculture with Social Protection (2020)</i> • <i>Social Protection Coverage Toolkit, FAO and IPC-IG/UNDP (2020)</i> • <i>FAO COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme: Economic Inclusion and Social Protection to Reduce Poverty (2020)</i> • <i>Social Protection and Resilience: Supporting Livelihoods in Protracted Crises and in Fragile and Humanitarian Contexts (2017) (Issue Paper)</i> • <i>Strengthening Sector Policies for Better Food Security and Nutrition Results: Social Protection (Policy Guidance Note 4) (2017)</i> • <i>The Economic Case for the Expansion of Social Protection Programmes</i> • <i>FAO Technical Guides 1–3, regarding gender-sensitive Social Protection.</i>

5.2. The International Labour Organization

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<p><i>World Social Protection Report 2017-19: Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (2017)</i></p>	<p>“Social protection, or social security, is a human right and is defined as the set of policies and programmes designed to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability throughout the life cycle. Social protection includes benefits for children and families, maternity, unemployment, employment injury, sickness, old age, disability, survivors, as well as health protection.”</p> <p>Key policy areas of Social Protection for ILO: 1) SP for children and families; 2) SP for women and men of working age (maternity protection, unemployment protection, employment injury protection, disability benefits); 3) SP for older men and women (income security in old age – i.e. pension schemes); 4) universal health coverage. For these target groups different schemes are defined.</p> <p>SP can entail a combination of contributory schemes (social insurance), and non-contributory tax-financed benefits (incl. social assistance).</p>
<p><i>Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)</i></p>	<p>Provides guidance to Member States, so as to ensure that all members of society enjoy at least a basic level of social security throughout their lives.</p> <p>Defines “social protection floors” as “nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion”.</p> <p>Defines which basic social security guarantees the floors should include, as well as what kind of benefits this may include.</p> <p>Schemes providing such benefits may include universal benefit schemes, social insurance schemes, social assistance schemes, negative income tax schemes, public employment schemes and employment support schemes.</p>
<p><i>Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)</i></p>	<p>Definition of the principle of social security. Defines nine social security contingencies: medical care, sickness, unemployment, old age, employment injury, family responsibilities, maternity, invalidity and survivorship. Sets out minimum parameters for States.</p>
<p><i>Other:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A number of International Labour Standards on social security (see ILO homepage)</i> • <i>Book: Building social protection systems: International standards and human rights instruments (2021)</i> • <i>ILO Policy Brief: A policy framework for tackling the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis (2020)</i> • <i>Universal social protection for human dignity, social justice and sustainable development: General Survey concerning the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) (2019)</i> • <i>Fiscal Space for Social Protection. A Handbook for Assessing Financing Options (2019)</i> • <i>Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All (2016)</i>

5.3. World Health Organization

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>Health 2020: Social Protection and Health (2015)</i>	<p>“Social protection refers to policies aimed to protect against the risks and needs associated with unemployment, parental and caring responsibilities, sickness and health care, disability, old age, housing and social exclusion in the form of social assistance and social insurance.”</p> <p>Underlines the need to strengthen link between health and SP over the life course.</p> <p>“The most effective actions to achieve greater equity in health outcomes are those that ensure an adequate level and distribution of social protection over the life-course and according to need.”</p>
<i>Social Protection: Shared Interests in Vulnerability Reduction and Development (2011)</i>	<p>“Social protection comprises a set of public and private policies and programmes aimed at reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivation. As a crucial policy tool, it supports equity and social justice, and delivers specific services and income transfers to help people escape poverty and deprivation.”</p> <p>“Common types of protection include: income security in old age (e.g. old age pensions), income support to the unemployed (e.g. unemployment benefits), health-care protection, and other schemes that include maternity protection and employment injury.”</p> <p>“Social protection is a key determinant of population health and health equity.”</p>

5.4. World Bank

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<p><i>Resilience, Equity and Opportunity: The World Bank’s Social Protection and Labour Strategy 2012–2022 (2012)</i></p>	<p>“Social protection and labor systems, policies, and programs help individuals and societies manage risk and volatility and protect them from poverty and destitution—through instruments that improve resilience, equity, and opportunity.”</p> <p>Adopts a “life-cycle approach”. The SPL strategy has three goals: 1) <i>Resilience</i> through insuring against drops in well being from a range of shocks; 2) <i>Equity</i> through protecting against destitution and promoting equality of opportunity; 3) <i>Opportunity</i> through promoting human capital in children and adults.</p> <p>“Productive jobs are the main avenue for opportunity, affording people socioeconomic mobility, while mitigating risks through adequate and secure incomes.”</p> <p>“SPL systems need to be <i>more inclusive</i>, reaching excluded groups to ensure their access to SPL, notably among the most vulnerable, the informal and the disadvantaged.”</p>
<p><i>Other:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A Real-Time Review of Country Measures (2021)</i> • <i>Sourcebook on the Foundations of Social Protection Delivery Systems (2020)</i> • <i>Book: Adaptive Social Protection: Building Resilience to Shocks (2020)</i> • <i>Book: The State of Social Safety Nets (2018)</i> • <i>Atlas of Social Protection with Indicators on Resilience and Equity (ASPIRE) (2012)</i>

5.5. International Monetary Fund

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>A Strategy for IMF Engagement on Social Spending (2019)</i>	<p>“In addition to social protection spending, ..., social spending is defined to comprise education and health spending. ... Social protection is defined to comprise social insurance and social assistance programs. ... The appropriate definition of basic education and health spending is country specific”.</p> <p>“mitigating the adverse effects of adjustment on vulnerable groups and improving spending adequacy can usually be addressed by including quantitative conditionality - <i>social spending floors</i>”. Such floors should prioritize vulnerable groups, and “where relevant, consider structural measures to strengthen social safety nets and improve the quality and efficiency of social spending and outcomes”.</p>
<i>Guidance Note on IMF Engagement on Social Safeguards in Low-Income Countries (2018)</i>	<p>“Programs should seek to support social spending and mitigate the adverse effects of program measures on the poor and vulnerable”.</p> <p>“Minimum floors on social and other priority spending should be included, wherever possible, in programs supported by PRGT facilities.”</p> <p>The topics for policy discussions should be tailored to country circumstances. The Note provides some examples of issues that could be included.</p>
<i>Guidance Note for Surveillance Under Article IV Consultations (2015)</i>	<p>Surveillance in Low-Income Countries should address macro-critical social issues such as poverty reduction, economic inclusion, human capital development and macro-critical governance issues should receive particular attention.</p> <p>Identifies social safety nets among the structural issues that staff may wish to consider.</p>
<i>Other:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How to Operationalize IMF Engagement on Social Spending during and in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Crisis (2020)</i> • <i>A Strategy for IMF Engagement on Social Spending – Case Studies (2018)</i> • <i>Independent Evaluation Office: IMF and Social Protection (2017)</i>

6. Social Protection Policies of UN Programmes and Funds

6.1. UN Development Programme

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<p><i>Leaving No One Behind: a Social Protection Primer for Practitioners (2016)</i></p>	<p>“This primer defines social protection as a set of nationally owned policies and instruments that provide income support and facilitate access to goods and services by all households and individuals at least at minimally accepted levels, to protect them from deprivation and social exclusion, particularly during periods of insufficient income, incapacity or inability to work. On a more operational level, social protection systems provide contributory or non-contributory forms of income support that reduce and prevent poverty; ensures access to basic social services to all, especially for groups that are traditionally vulnerable or excluded;”.</p> <p>“The notion of social protection as an obligation under human rights law is very well established and flows directly from the right to social security and a decent standard of living... ”.</p> <p>Adopts a “life cycle approach” and promotes the universality of social protection.</p> <p>“The notion of social protection as an obligation under human rights law is very well established and flows directly from the right to social security and a decent standard of living”.</p>
<p><i>Other:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Independent Evaluation Office, Lessons from Evaluations: UNDP Support to Social Protection (2020)</i> • <i>Social Protection in Africa. Discussion Paper for the International Seminar on Social Protection in Africa (2015)</i> • <i>Inclusive and Resilient Development: The Role of Social Protection. Prepared for G20 Development Group, 2010-2011 (ILO and UNDP, 2011)</i> • <i>Sharing Innovative Experiences: Successful Social Protection Floor Experiences. (UNDP and ILO, 2011)</i>

6.2. UN Children's Fund

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>Global Social Protection Programme Framework (2019)</i>	<p>“a set of policies and programmes aimed at preventing or protecting all people against poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their life-course, with a particular emphasis towards vulnerable groups”.</p> <p>“At the heart of child-sensitive social protection is the protection of children and families against economic vulnerability”.</p> <p>4 key areas of child-sensitive SP systems: social transfers, social insurance, labour and jobs, social service workforce.</p>
<i>Activities, Tools and Resources to Support Implementation of UNICEF’s 10 Action Areas in Social Protection: A companion Guidance to UNICEF’s Global Social Protection Programme Framework (2019)</i>	Further specifies content of the 4 key areas of the Framework.
<i>Programme Guidance: Strengthening Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems (2019)</i>	Focuses on social transfers, especially cash transfers.
<i>UNICEF Humanitarian Cash Transfers Programmatic Guidance (2016)</i>	<p>“... set of public and private policies and programmes aimed at preventing, reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities to poverty and deprivation. It is essential to furthering UNICEF’s commitment to the realisation of the rights of children, women and families to an adequate standard of living and essential services”.</p> <p>Specifies how to undertake cash-transfer related activities.</p>
<i>Other:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>UNICEF Social Protection Response to COVID-19: Technical Note (2020)</i> • <i>Making Cash Transfers Work for Children and Families (2017)</i>

6.3. World Food Programme

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<p><i>World Food Programme Strategy for Support to Social Protection (2021)</i></p>	<p>“Countries define social protection according to their context. An interagency definition describes social protection as the, ‘policies and programmes aimed at preventing, and protecting people against, poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout their life [...with] a particular emphasis on vulnerable groups’ (SPIAC-B, 2019, p.1). These typically cover a range of cash and/or in-kind transfers; they may also include some fee waivers, active labour market schemes, targeted subsidies and/or social care services.”</p> <p>“Social protection can enhance food security and nutrition through several entry points. Food security has four elements: food availability, access, utilisation and stability over time. Improving food access (by enhancing economic capacities) and stability (smoothing consumption during disruption) is intrinsic to social protection.”</p>
<p><i>Other:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘WFP’s work in enabling social protection around the globe. Highlights of the World Food Programme’s contribution to social protection in a new normal’ (2021)</i> • <i>‘Maximizing social protection’s contribution to human capital development. Fill the Nutrient Gap analysis’ (2020)</i> • <i>Social Protection and COVID-19 in Urban and Rural Settings (2020)</i> • <i>Supporting national social protection responses to the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 (2020)</i> • <i>Social Protection and Climate Change (2019)</i> • <i>Update of WFP’s safety nets policy. The role of food assistance in social protection (2012)</i>

7. Other UN entities

7.1. UN Women

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<p><i>Fiscal Space for Social Protection: A Handbook for Assessing Financial Options (2019)</i></p>	<p>“Social protection, or social security, is defined as the set of policies and programmes designed to reduce and prevent poverty and vulnerability throughout the life cycle. Social protection includes child and family benefits, maternity protection, unemployment support, employment injury, sickness and health protection, as well as old-age, disability benefits and survivors’ pensions. Social protection systems typically address all these policy areas by a mix of public social insurance (paid from employers’ and workers’ contributions) and social assistance (paid from the government budget).”</p> <p>“Social protection should not be confused with other social sectors such as education and health.”</p> <p>“Social protection is a human right”.</p> <p>“Social protection floors are nationally defined sets of basic social security guarantees that should ensure, at a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and to basic income security which together secure effective access to goods and services defined as necessary at the national level.”</p> <p>Focus on “Fiscal Space”.</p>
<p><i>Leaving No-One Behind: Access to Social Protection for All Migrant Women (2020)</i></p>	<p>“Social protection is a universal human right and a key element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.</p> <p>“Social protection and social security are often used interchangeably to refer to policies and programmes designed to reduce and prevent poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. Social protection or social security systems usually comprise of schemes that provide comprehensive protection across the life course, including child and family benefits, maternity protection, unemployment support, employment injury benefits, sickness benefits, old-age benefits, disability benefits, and survivors’ benefits as well as access to affordable medical care.”</p>
<p><i>Making National Social Protection Floors Work for Women (2015)</i></p>	<p>Defines SP floors as: “a set of minimum guarantees, including basic income security for children, working-age adults, older people and people with disabilities, as well as essential health care for all, SPFs hold promise for women, who are over-represented among those excluded from existing social protection schemes.”</p> <p>Strongly emphasizes ILO Recommendation No. 202</p>

7.2. UNAIDS

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>HIV and Social Protection Assessment Tool (2017)</i>	<p>“Social protection is more than cash and social transfers such as food and vouchers. It encompasses economic, health financing, insurance, employment assistance and social care to reduce poverty, inequality, exclusion and barriers to accessing basic services. The purpose, target groups, scope of benefits and coverage provided by the various social protection programmes in each country vary widely; however, the majority of social protection programmes around the world are designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability of poor people.”</p> <p>Tool scans SP programmes and assesses their sensitivity to HIV response in a given country.</p>
<i>HIV and Social Protection (2014)</i>	<p>Social protection defined as “all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalized with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of the poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups.”</p> <p>“Social protection — in particular, the notion of social protection floors — refers to a minimum set of nationally defined and guaranteed basic goods and services aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty and social exclusion.”</p> <p>SP as a human right: “Social protection guarantees are enshrined in international human rights conventions and are important to the realization of social, economic and cultural rights.”</p> <p>Promotes HIV-specific social protection.</p>
<i>Other:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>UNAIDS 2016–21 Strategy: on the Fast Track to End AIDS (2015)</i>

8. Other UN Specialized Agencies, Programmes and Funds

This section enlists agencies, funds and programmes that either do not have an explicit social protection policy, or that adhere to the social protection policy of another agency. It should be noted that the current work has explicitly focused on social protection policies. Even for those actors that such a policy could not be identified, they practically all emphasize one or several goals also inherent to social protection, such as: social inclusiveness, human rights, sustainable development, poverty reduction, etc. Many of the institutions listed below are also participants in social protection collaboration initiatives.

- 1) No explicit social protection policy:
 - *ICAO, ITU, UNIDO, UPU, WIPO, WMO, UNFPA*
- 2) No explicit social protection policy. Social protection present through policymaking or research:
 - *IFAD: Social protection and inclusive rural transformation, IFAD Research series (2017); FAO, IFAD and the World Food Programme, Achieving Zero Hunger: the critical role of investments in social protection and agriculture (2015); Revised Operational Guidelines on Targeting (2019).*
 - *UNHabitat: Expert Group Meeting on Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness (2019); Social Resilience Guide (2018)*
 - *UNEP: UNDP-UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative; Mainstreaming Environment and Climate for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development: A Handbook to Strengthen Planning and Budgeting Processes (UNDP-UNEP 2015)*
- 3) No explicit social protection policy/Connects to social protection policies of the ILO:
 - *IMO: Maritime Labour Convention (2006) covers conditions of employment including social security protection.*
 - *UNESCO: Memorandum of Understanding between the ILO and the UNESCO (2014)*
 - *UNHCR: ILO-UNHCR partnership: Joint action for decent work and long-term solutions for refugees and other forcefully displaced persons (2019); Social Protection and the Global Compact on Refugees (2018); Mapping of Social Safety Nets for Refugees Opportunities and Challenges (2018)*
 - *UNIDO: ILO Guidelines on decent work and socially responsible tourism (2017)*
 - *UNHabitat: Social protection systems for all to prevent homelessness and facilitate access to adequate housing (2020)*

9. Social Protection Policies of other Organizations

9.1. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<p><i>OECD Development Policy Papers No. 20 – Towards Universal Social Protection: Lessons from the Universal Health Coverage Initiative (2019)</i></p>	<p>“The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) definition of social expenditure includes public and private benefits with a social purpose grouped along the following policy areas: old age, survivors, incapacity-related benefits, health, family, active labour market programmes, unemployment, housing and other social policy areas. This study takes a flexible approach and embraces country-specific definitions of social protection to guide the work, and alternatively relies on the ILO’s definition, which defines social protection as the guarantees that “should ensure at a minimum that, over the life cycle, all in need have access to essential health care and basic income security”.</p> <p>“Fundamentally, USP is a human right that everyone, as a member of society, should enjoy, including children, mothers, people with disabilities, workers, older people, migrants, indigenous peoples and minorities.”</p> <p>Defines core principles of universal social protection.</p>
<p><i>OECD Development Policy Tools - Social Protection System Review: A Toolkit (2018)</i></p>	<p>“Social protection is subject to numerous definitions that vary not only among countries but also among international organisations. As the International Labour Organization (ILO) acknowledges, “[differing] cultures, values, traditions and institutional and political structures affect definitions of social protection as well as the choice of how protection should be provided” [...] The SPSR therefore uses the country definitions of social protection to guide the scope of the analysis. Nonetheless, the ILO definition of social protection provides a useful reference: ...”.</p>
<p><i>OECD Webpage</i></p>	<p>“Social protection is a measure of the extent to which countries assume responsibility for supporting the standard of living of disadvantaged or vulnerable groups. Benefits may be targeting at low-income households, the elderly, disabled, sick, unemployed, or young persons. Social spending comprises cash benefits, direct in-kind provision of goods and services, and tax breaks with social purposes. To be considered “social”, programmes have to involve either redistribution of resources across households or compulsory participation.”</p>
<p><i>Other:</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Society at a Glance 2019: OECD Social Indicators (2019)</i> • <i>Promoting Pro-Poor Growth: Social Protection (2009)</i> • <i>Social Expenditure Database (SOCX)</i>

9.2. European Union

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>Results and Indicators for Development: Social Protection (2021)</i>	“Social Protection refers to nationally defined systems of policies that provide income security and access to health services for all people, and equip and protect them throughout their lives to protect them against poverty and risks to their livelihoods”.
<i>The Europe 2020 Strategy (2010)</i>	The “Europe 2020 Strategy” and the “Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion” form the main policy framework in the field of EU SP.
<i>European Pillar of Social Rights (2017)</i>	Outlines nine key principles on social protection and social inclusion.
<i>EU Social Protection Systems Programme (2015–2019)</i>	<p>“Social Protection in the EU-SPS programme was understood in its comprehensive meaning covering social assistance, social insurance, active labour market measures and access to essential social services and care. The reduction of inequalities through social protection and the promotion of equality within other spheres of policy is an essential aspect of the comprehensive approach.”</p> <p><i>“Social protection is a human right further supported by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.”</i> (italics in original)</p> <p>“Access to basic income security and equal access to essential services are basic rights of all people, not issues of charity or ‘good will’.”</p> <p>“The functions of social protection instruments are prevention, protection, promotion, and transformation: social protection helps people in their efforts to reduce life course risks, protects them from adverse catastrophic effects of life cycle events and promotes their capability to manage their lives better.”</p>
<i>Stakeholder Consultation Strategy: Access to Social Protection (2017)</i>	“Social protection encompasses all social benefits in cash and kind, with typical ones being benefits in case of: unemployment, sickness, accidents at work and occupational diseases, invalidity, old-age, pre-retirement, death (i.e. survivors’ pensions and death grants), maternity/paternity, parental and family obligations, and need for health care or long- term care.”
<i>Other:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regulation, Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, 2021/947 (2021)</i> • <i>EU Social Protection Committee Annual Report (2019)</i> • <i>Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion</i> • <i>Communication, Social Protection in European Union Development Cooperation, (COM(2012)446) (2012)</i>

9.3. African Union

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (2015)</i>	SP is noted as a goal in the 2063 Agenda.
<i>Social Policy Framework for Africa (2008)</i>	<p>“Social protection includes responses by the state and society to protect citizens from risks, vulnerabilities and deprivations. It also includes strategies and programmes aimed at ensuring a minimum standard of livelihood for all people in a given country. This entails measures to secure education and health care, social welfare, livelihood, access to stable income, as well as employment. In effect, social protection measures are comprehensive, and are not limited to traditional measures of social security.”</p> <p>Purpose: “provide an overarching policy structure to assist AU Member States in the development of their national social policies to promote human empowerment and development in their ongoing quest to address the multiple social issues facing their societies.”</p> <p>“The interventions falling under a social protection framework include social security measures and furthering income security; and also the pursuit of an integrated policy approach that has a strong developmental focus, such as job creation, equitable and accessible health and other services, social welfare, quality education and so on. AU Member States have noted that social protection has multiple beneficial impacts on national economies, and is essential to build human capital, break the intergenerational poverty cycle and reduce the growing inequalities that constrain Africa’s economic and social development.”</p>
<i>Other:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The African Union Development Agency: Integrating Social Protection into Agricultural Development Programmes (2019)</i> • <i>Annual Trends and Outlook Report 2017-2018 – Boosting Growth to End Hunger by 2025: the Role of Social Protection (ATOR) (2018)</i> • <i>Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods (2014)</i>

9.4. African Development Bank

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>At the Center of Africa's Transformation: Strategy for 2013-2022 (2013)</i>	<p>“The Bank will assist African member countries in building safety net programs to reduce vulnerability and increase the integration of disadvantaged and marginalized groups. Safety net programs, as part of a broader social protection agenda, would address the risks, vulnerability and social exclusion that these groups normally face.”</p> <p>Areas of “special focus” for the AfDB: fragile states, agriculture and food security, and gender.</p>
<i>Assessing Progress in Africa Toward the MDGs (2010)</i>	<p>Jointly produced by the AfDB, the AU Commission, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa.</p> <p>Sees SP as an instrument to accelerate progress toward the MDGs in Africa.</p> <p>“This report sees social protection to be more than a safety-net that protects people from risks and shocks. It is about addressing the main causes of poverty by allowing the marginalized or vulnerable groups to benefit from and productively participate in the economic growth process. For social protection to impact directly on human development, it has to be protective and preventive, and to serve as an instrument of social justice.”</p>
<i>Other:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>AfDB Social Bond Framework (2017)</i> • <i>AfDB Policy on Poverty Reduction (2004)</i>

9.5. Asian Development Bank

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>Social Protection Operational Plan 2014-2020 (2013)</i>	Proposes five priority areas for action between 2014 and 2020.
<i>Social Protection Strategy (2001)</i>	<p>“Social protection is defined as the set of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labor markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and interruption/loss of income.”</p> <p>Spells out the scope of social protection and commitment of the ADB to develop priority interventions in five major elements: labor market policies and programs; social insurance programs; social assistance and welfare service programs for vulnerable groups; micro and area-based schemes to address vulnerability at the community level.</p> <p>Identifies “intended clientele” and targeted vulnerable groups.</p>
<i>Other:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Special Evaluation Study on ADB's Social Protection Strategy (2012)</i>

9.6. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

Policy Instrument	Key Elements of Policy
<i>Environmental and Social Framework (2016)</i>	<p>“The Bank believes that social development and inclusion are critical for sound development. For the Bank, inclusion means empowering people to participate in, and benefit from, the development process in a manner consistent with local conditions. Inclusion encompasses policies to promote equity of opportunity and nondiscrimination, by improving the access of poor, disadvantaged and disabled people to education, health, social protection, housing, environmental quality, infrastructure, affordable energy, water and sanitation, employment, financial services and productive assets. It also embraces action to remove barriers against vulnerable groups, who are often excluded from the development process, and to ensure that their voices can be heard. In this regard, the Bank seeks, through the Projects it finances, to be supportive of these human rights and to encourage respect for them, in a manner consistent with its Articles of Agreement.”</p>