



KONINKRIJK BELGIË

Beleidscele Meryame KITIR

Minister van Ontwikkelingssamenwerking belast met Grote Steden

Ministre de la Coopération au Développement, chargée des Grandes Villes

Ministerin der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, beauftragt mit den Großstädten

SPEAKING POINTS

High Level Political Forum (HLPF) – 07/07/2021 – 15u00

As you know the Covid pandemic is not only a major health emergency, but also an economic and social crisis.

Many people have lost their jobs. Many children have had to stay home instead of going to school. For the first time in decennia extreme poverty is rising.

If we want to build back better, I believe we need to draw lessons.

One of these lessons is that social protection is necessary: not only to provide safety nets for all of us, but also to bounce back faster economically.

All countries in the world have taken some form of temporary social protection measures during the pandemic!

Still, more than half of the global population does not benefit from any form of social protection.

That means that they have no income when they lose their job. That means that families do not receive any support for their children.

Imagine that you are selling fruits on a local market somewhere and that a lockdown keeps you from raising that income.

How would you feed your children?

How will you pay for their schooling?

That is when the cycle of poverty starts. It starts when people lose the power to make their own choices.

Fear of losing income and not being able to take care of your family puts a constant strain on people's lives.



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Providing social protection is therefore all about empowering people!

Since I became Minister in October last year, I have taken several initiatives to support that.

Almost 90% of jobs in sub-Saharan Africa are informal. In Central Africa I have launched a thematic portfolio on social protection: we will focus on decent work and strengthening labour laws, but also on formalising employment.

Children deserve the best start in life. With UNICEF we are starting a “cash transfer” system to their advantage. The idea is to embed these cash transfers into government schemes and create a system of child benefit.

Our civil society partners have developed a thematic portfolio on decent work.

Also the ILO is an important partner of Belgium. We finance its flagship programme on Social Protection Floors for all, in Senegal and Burkina Faso.

But all of this is not enough. We have to act globally and join our efforts. That is why I fully support the proposal of Professor De Schutter to create a Global Fund on Social Protection.

As a Belgian Minister I am proud that several people who I met, have told me that the Belgian system of social protection was an example for them.

At the same time I don't want to export our system as a wonder solution. We need to think of what social protection really means in countries that are very different than Belgium.

I also think it is very important that we move beyond job creation as the only solution to end poverty. There are people who work and are still poor.

Social protection is also about making sure that those jobs really are a way out of poverty.



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I invite everyone to join efforts on this topic and use the economic recovery to really lay the foundations for universal social protection.

Thanks you very much.