

Brief for GSDR 2015

Social protection policies in the context of sustainable development policies and climate change

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This brief examines some of the most important aspects, statements and country programs that explain the evolution and global importance of policies that integrate social protection policies with those oriented to promote sustainable development and responses to climate change.

The integration of Social Protection in the climate and environmental debate

With the support of initiatives such as the Social Protection Floors (PPS), led by the ILO and WHO, and defined as 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”* (ILO, 2011), there is an increase interest to link social protection policies with policies of sustainable development and those aimed to combat climate change, considering that they can also facilitate the green transition to sectors such as reforestation, wind or solar energy or recycling, in addition to improve health, facilitate access to energy or provide new employment opportunities for those more poor and vulnerable (ILO, 2012).

Similar approaches consider the need for measures to promote the creation, adaptation and strengthening of social protection systems towards "climate proof" models that allow States to guarantee the rights of individuals and communities (Jodoin and Lofts, 2013). The term developed by Davies et al., (2009) called *Adaptive Social Protection*, identifies the common objectives of social protection, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, leading to consider that social protection can help people to adapt to climate change, facilitating the ability to face multiple risks and vulnerabilities faced by the

poor and excluded in these contexts (Bene et al., 2013).

From several global forums there has been recognition of the importance and integration of social protection in the fight against climate change. The Chief Executive Board of the United Nations System for Coordination claimed in 2009 that the poorest and most vulnerable communities should be protected from the cumulative impacts that climate change has on hunger and poverty through improving social protection programs and their integration under adaptive strategies and approaches (UNCEB, 2009).

The Final Document of the 2010 Millennium Summit, proposed to cope with the impacts of the crisis from the development of policies related with social protection (UN, 2010). Similarly, the final resolution of the Conference Rio+20 "The Future We Want" (UN, 2012) recognized social protection, given the need to support *“developing countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty and promote empowerment of the poor”*, identifying green policies to promote and achieve social inclusion, more specifically a minimum level of social protection (art.58n), where *“social protection systems that address and reduce inequality and social exclusion are essential for eradicating poverty and advancing the achievement of the MDGs”* (art.107).

The Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) also recognizes the importance of the transformation processes that exploit the synergies between the planning of adaptation to climate change, development strategies, social protection, and disaster risk reduction policies. These synergies are reflected in the increased

resilience of livelihoods in the long term among poor and marginalized people, whether in urban or rural or regional contexts (Field et al., 2014).

Country experiences

The *Bolsa Familia* program of the Government of Brazil is also recognized by the IPCC to provide concrete measures to address the systemic vulnerabilities and inequalities that block effective responses to major crises (Olsson et al., 2014), providing compensation for poor people affected by the policies of reducing deforestation (ILO, 2012), increasing the income of these populations, while livelihoods aimed at the conservation of ecosystems and sustainable use of natural resources are promoted (ILO, 2013).

In Ethiopia, the *Food Security Programme* (FSP) has been recognized by the IPCC for its positive linkage of social protection with the responses to climate change (Noble et al., 2014), increasing food security and reducing vulnerability to drought among more vulnerable populations and strengthening the resilience of rural livelihoods (Davies et al., 2009; ILO, 2013).

The *Indian National Rural Employment Guarantee Act* is one of the world's largest rights based social protection initiatives allowing develop rural productive capacity and resilience to climate

change, from three basic objectives (Davies et al, 2013.): end poverty in the villages through employment; improve the performance of local governments; and promote self-sustainability of peoples (Matta, 2009).

The *Philippines' Upland Development Program*, aims to protect vulnerable populations from the consequences of the global financial crisis and the impacts of climate change aiming to "*transform poverty into self-sufficiency and degradation into restoration*", through activities that conserve, protect and use in a sustainable way forested areas (Atienza, 2009).

The way forward

The increasing importance of the described approaches and experiences, lead to consider the recognition and greater integration of social protection policies in the future context of the development policy framework post-2015, as well as in the context of policies for sustainable development and the fight against climate change. Lastly, the present policy approach and examples, connecting the protection of people and the protection of the planet brings durable benefits with few options for regret in its implementation and long-term development.

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