



ESCWA

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Concept Paper for Workshop on Social Protection Reform in the Arab Region

**25-28 February 2019
ESCWA, Beirut, Lebanon
MZ-Mezzanine Hall**

1. BACKGROUND

Social protection¹ plays an essential role in reducing poverty and inequality and protecting vulnerable population groups against lifecycle risks. It may substantially increase social cohesion and decrease economic volatility through smoothing consumption across business cycles. The individual's "right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself/herself and of his/her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control" is an inalienable and indispensable human right enshrined in the article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for implementation of nationally appropriate social protection systems and extension of coverage to the poor and the vulnerable populations (SDG1, target 1.3), as well as achievement of universal coverage of essential health services (SDG3, target 3.8).

In the recent years, many Arab countries devoted substantial efforts to reforming their social protection systems by extending the coverage, reducing fragmentation and improving sustainability of social insurance systems, introducing targeted social assistance schemes, improving access to basic health services, establishing integrated registries and information systems, etc. The workshop will have the purpose of enhancing the capacities of ESCWA member countries to undertake such reforms through peer-learning and discussions of recent and ongoing reforms in the spheres of social insurance, social assistance and health care in the Arab region, achievements and remaining challenges in these spheres. The objective is to encourage a "system's perspective" on social protection reform that enables Governments to better integrate the different parts of social insurance, assistance, health care, including through the establishment of integrated management information systems. Presentations and discussions during the workshop will also inform the first draft of the upcoming report "Social Protection Reform in the Arab Region".

Each day of the 4-day workshop will be devoted to a specific topic related to social protection delivery: social insurance, health care, social assistance, integrated registries, information systems and institutional arrangements. Morning sessions of the workshop will begin with thematic presentations of the international experts, followed by presentations of 2-3 country cases from the Arab region, Latin America and possibly other regions where social protection reforms have already been brought about. Afternoon sessions will be devoted to moderated discussions and group work led by international experts. The event is expected to build the capacity of relevant policy-makers and stimulate informed domestic debates about the need for closer integration and harmonization of the different elements of social protection systems. It is expected that after the workshop government representatives will be able to better cooperate across government ministries at home by better appreciating their interdependence. It is also expected that Government representatives will be better aware of the wider policy implications of the relevant reform design and of the political economy aspects of the choices and trade-offs, inherent in the reform process. The event is scheduled to take place in Beirut, Lebanon, from 25 to 28 February 2019.

¹ hereinafter the definition of social protection is applied in accordance with the concept of the Social Protection Floor (ILO recommendation 202) embracing social insurance, social assistance and health care systems.

2. Expected Accomplishments and Objective of the Workshop

This workshop is targeted at policy-makers working on reforming social insurance, social assistance and health care systems in ESCWA member States. The key objective of the event is to enhance the capacities of ESCWA member countries to expand, complete and harmonize their social protection systems and to encourage a “system’s perspective” on social protection reform that enables Governments to better integrate the different parts of social insurance, assistance, health care, including through the establishment of integrated management information systems.

For instance, participants will:

- (i) exchange and discuss information on recent developments in reforming social insurance, social assistance and health care systems in the Arab region;
- (ii) assess the systemic interdependence across different components of social protection systems;
- (iii) increase their capacity and knowledge in the field of design, implementation and monitoring of social protection reform;
- (iv) strengthen intraregional cooperation between the Arab countries in the sphere of social protection reform.

Information discussed during the event will also feed into the ESCWA’s report “Social Protection Reform in the Arab Region” which will be published later in 2019.

3. Outputs of the Workshop

The workshop is expected to stimulate positive policy changes in the Arab states through strengthened capacity of relevant policy-makers, increased cooperation and information sharing among the countries. Participants will engage in discussions and analysis of the ongoing social protection reforms, learn lessons and experiences from the other Arab countries and, when appropriate, the experiences of the other regions where similar reforms have already been brought about.

4. Draft Agenda

DAY 1	
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Registration and welcoming coffee</i>
13:30 – 14:30	Opening and welcoming remarks by: - H.E. ESCWA Executive Secretary Dr. Rola Dashti - H.E. Minister of Labour Camille Abousleiman - H.E. Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Richard Kouyoumjian Keynote address by Adib Nehmeh, Consultant in Development Master of Ceremony: Nabil Abu Dargham, ESCWA
14:30 – 15:00	<i>Coffee break</i>
15:00 – 17:00	Session 1: Social Protection Reform in the Arab Region Introduction of the participants 1. Social Protection Reform in the Arab Region (Report Overview) Anton Bjork, ESCWA Q&A session, comments and discussion Moderator: Gisela Nauk, ESCWA

DAY 2	
9:00 – 11:00	<p>Session 2: Reforming Social Insurance: Towards Improved Harmonization, Sustainability and Higher Coverage Rates</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <p>1. Social Insurance in the Arab Region (Regional Overview) Gustavo Demarco, Lead Economist, World Bank</p> <p>2. Social Insurance Reform in Lebanon Chawki Abou Nassif, Cabinet Director, National Social Security Fund (Lebanon)</p> <p>3. Social Insurance Reform in Tunisia Kamel Maddouri, General Director of Social Security, Ministry of Social Affairs (Tunisia)</p> <p>4. Social Insurance Reform in Jordan Mahmoud Al Ma'aïta, Director of the Department of Actuarial Research and Studies, Social Security Corporation (Jordan)</p>
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:30 – 13:30	<p>Session 2: Reforming Social Insurance (continued)</p> <p>Moderated Discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Ibrahim Muhanna, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, The Muhanna Foundation</p>
13:30 – 14:30	<i>Lunch break</i>
14:30 – 15:30	<p>Session 3: Reforming Social Assistance: Designing Policies that Leave No-One Behind</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <p>1. Social Assistance Reforms in Egypt Hania Sholkamy, Associate Professor, American University in Cairo</p> <p>2. National Poverty Targeting Programme (Lebanon) (TBC)</p> <p>3. Palestinian National Cash Transfer Programme Ayman Sawalha, Minister Advisor, Ministry of Social Development (Palestine)</p> <p>4. Tekavoul Programme Mohamedou M'Haimid, Coordinator for the Tekavoul programme, National Tadamoun Agency (Mauritania)</p>
15:30 – 17:00	<p>Session 3: Reforming Social Assistance (continued)</p> <p>Moderated Discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Haneen Ismail Sayed, Lead Social Protection, Jobs and Gender Specialist, MENA Region, World Bank</p>

DAY 3	
9:00 - 11:00	<p>Session 4: Reforming Healthcare System</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <p>1. Regional Overview of Healthcare Reforms Maha El Rabbat, Executive Director, MENA Health Policy Forum</p> <p>2. RAMED Programme in Morocco Anas Rihani, Head of the department for following up the implementation of RAMED, Ministry of Health (Morocco)</p> <p>3. Mandatory Healthcare Insurance in Egypt Mai Farid, Assistant Minister and Executive Director of the Economic Justice Unit, Ministry of Finance (Egypt)</p> <p>4. Healthcare Reform in Jordan Ibrahim Muhanna, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, The Muhanna Foundation</p>
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:30 - 13:30	<p>Session 4: Reforming Healthcare System (continued)</p> <p>Moderated Discussion</p> <p>Moderators: Maha El Rabbat, Executive Director, MENA Health Policy Forum</p>
13:30 – 14:30	<i>Lunch break</i>
14:30 - 15:30	<p>Session 5: Integrated Registries and Information Systems</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <p>1. Integrated Registries and the Social Identifier in Tunisia Najet Dkhil, Director of the Unit for Administering the Implementation of the Database of Poor and Vulnerable Families, Ministry of Social Affairs (Tunisia)</p> <p>2. Welfare Database in Iraq and Mechanisms for Targeting the Poor Qusay Al Doori, Director General of the Technical Department, Ministry of Planning (Iraq)</p> <p>3. Digitized Registries in the Arab Region: Requirements, Impact and Best Practices Nawar Al-Awa, Regional Adviser, Technology for Development Division (ESCWA)</p>
15:30 - 17:00	<p>Session 5: Integrated Registries and Information Systems (continued)</p> <p>Moderated Discussion</p> <p>Moderator: Caroline Tassot, Development Economist, OECD</p>

DAY 4	
9:00 – 10:00	<p>Session 6: Institutional Arrangements Governing Social Protection</p> <p><i>Presentations:</i></p> <p>1. <i>Governing the Social Protection System in Morocco</i> Mohamed Mahdad, Director of Governance, Ministry of General Affairs and Governance (Morocco)</p> <p>2. <i>The Social Dialogue in Tunisia</i> Kamel Maddouri, General Director of Social Security, Ministry of Social Affairs (Tunisia)</p>
10:00 – 11:00	<p>Session 6: Institutional Arrangements Governing Social Protection</p> <p><i>Moderated Discussion</i></p> <p>Moderator: Luca Pellerano, Senior Social Protection Specialist, ILO Regional Office for Arab States</p>
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:30 – 12:30	<p>Session 7: Social Protection Systems for Social Cohesion and Equality</p> <p><i>Presentations:</i></p> <p>1. <i>Social Protection, Inequality and Social Cohesion</i> Caroline Tassot, Development Economist, OECD</p>
12:30 – 13:30	<p>Session 7: Social Protection Systems for Social Cohesion and Equality</p> <p><i>Moderated Discussion</i></p> <p>Moderator: Gisela Nauk, ESCWA</p>
13:30 – 14:30	<i>Lunch break</i>
14:30 – 17:00	<p>Session 8: Conclusions and Recommendations</p> <p>This session will consist of a final discussion on lessons learned during the workshop. It will also identify follow-up activities and needs and priorities for technical support from ESCWA.</p> <p>Moderator: Gisela Nauk, ESCWA</p>