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## D. Reports requested under article 19 of the Constitution

### General Survey concerning the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)

**221.** The Committee dedicated a sitting to the discussion of the General Survey carried out by the Committee of Experts concerning the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). The record of this discussion is contained in section B of Part Two of this report.

### Concluding remarks

- 222.** At the meeting on the adoption of the outcome of the discussions, the following statements were made by members of the Committee.
- 223. Worker members:** We welcome the adoption of the outcome of the discussions on the General Survey which reaffirm the crucial nature of the subject of social protection for the ILO and the fact that the extension of that protection is one of its priority objectives.
- 224.** The aim of social protection floors is not just to tackle poverty but also to reduce inequalities and ensure that cohesion and social justice are achieved.
- 225.** Our conclusions also provide an overview of the challenges that remain. One example is the accessibility of health care, which is a fundamental right but continues to pose major problems for many nations, irrespective of whether they are high- or low- income countries. We also underline the importance of social protection mechanisms being grounded in law and based on the principle of solidarity. The Workers' group recalls in this regard that social protection floors are not a mere minimum but constitute a basis for developing systems that ensure increasingly higher levels of social security, as called for by Recommendation No. 202. The conclusions adopted highlight the importance of having inclusive protection systems in order to incorporate informal sector workers.
- 226.** We have also stressed the importance of ensuring financing based on solidarity and the fact that this represents the very heart of social security. This should not be seen as a cost to be reduced but as an investment in human potential. It is also important to underline the fact that protection comes in the first instance under the responsibility of the State. Our conclusions contain important reflections on the underlying principles such as the importance of non-discrimination and the promotion of equality.
- 227.** Lastly, we ask the Office to give its support to the tripartite constituents. Among other things, this requires the development of technical cooperation and assistance and support for the ratification of instruments. Moreover, it is essential that the ILO participates more extensively in developing cohesion in the field of social protection by conducting a dialogue with the other international institutions that are actors in this sphere. The ILO must play a leading role in this respect. Finally, the conclusions invite the ILO, in the discharge of its mandate, to take account of the General Survey and of our Committee's discussions and conclusions.
- 228. Employer members:** The Employer members are pleased with the constructive discussions that took place on this year's General Survey report on the social protection floors, Recommendation No. 202. We believe that the focus on a single instrument was beneficial as it allowed the Committee a thorough and in-depth examination of all the provisions and a proper consideration of the various issues covered by this instrument. The survey was very useful in shedding light on stand-alone Recommendations as a particular form of ILO

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standard. While they cannot be ratified, stand-alone Recommendations can provide relevant and comprehensive guidance and can therefore have a significant impact on ILO member States. Stand-alone Recommendations can also be more easily and quickly replaced and updated as necessary to ensure relevance.

- 229.** We would like to take the opportunity to reiterate some important points made in the discussion that are reflected in our comments and the report.
- 230.** The importance must be emphasized of policies that are conducive to enterprise sustainability, skills development and employment generation. Poverty and vulnerability can only be sustainably reduced by productive and sustainable employment. Moreover, the effectiveness of social protection floor systems depends on the capacity of economies to provide the necessary resources.
- 231.** Second, social security systems should be an integral part of national sustainable development planning structured for the needs and means of the country and should incentivize growth employment and sustainable enterprises.
- 232.** Third, Recommendation No. 202 sets out examples of the types of benefits and funding schemes that may be provided for the social floors but does not express any preference or provide any limitation to innovation and development in this area as long as the schemes are delivered efficiently and effectively in the national context.
- 233.** Fourth, in order to achieve the objectives of social protection floors as set out in Paragraph 2 of Recommendation No. 202, namely the prevention of alleviation of poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, priority attention needs to be given to the measures recommended in paragraph 10. In particular, the promotion of productive economic activity and formal employment is imperative.
- 234.** Fifth, although we agree with the importance of broad social dialogue on the establishment of social protection floors, we must nevertheless emphasize the need for reasonable balance in the dialogue between representatives between those who are to be protected on the one hand, and representatives of those who are supposed to finance the protection on the other. This balance is critical.
- 235.** Sixth, concerning austerity measures and policies of fiscal consolidation, with reference to paragraphs 646 and 647, we disagree with the experts' view that fiscal consolidation policies cannot be compatible with the objectives of Recommendation No. 202 on social protection floors. The definition of a social protection floor must also take into account the economic circumstances in a country.
- 236.** Furthermore, regarding paragraph 624 of the General Survey, we disagree with the negative assessment by the experts with regards to the defined contribution schemes based on individual savings or notional accounts, and the positive statement with regard to the trend in a number of countries to scale back privatization and strengthen public schemes.
- 237.** Finally, we stress that while much progress has been achieved, gaps exist and need to be gradually filled following the guidance of Recommendation No. 202 in member States. Moreover, while the aim remains full coverage of social protection, government policies should set the right conditions and incentives to promote private initiatives and commitments to make sure that as many people as possible can participate and contribute to the creation of social protection and those social protection floors.
- 238.** The outcome of the General Survey discussion is a topic I would like to just briefly address. We wish to highlight in particular some important points in this regard.
- 239.** First, national social protection floor policies and systems should be designed to promote productive economic activity and the growth of formal employment as well as education, vocational training, productive skills and employability. In the design and the

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implementation of effective social protection floors it is important to combine preventative, promotional and active measures benefits and social services.

240. Second, financing mechanisms based on solidarity are at the heart of social security and prerequisites for achieving universal social protection floors. In order to be effective they need to be accompanied by measures that enhance income generation, entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises to reduce poverty and inequality in a sustainable manner.
241. Third, there must be common commitment among the tripartite constituents for the formulation of comprehensive social protection policies coordinated and coherent with other social policies, notably policies with respect to education and health as well as those that deal with economic, vocational training and employment promotion policies.
242. Fourth, the Committee also noted the strong commitment to strengthen effective social dialogue and participatory processes as fundamental elements of policy formulation and implementation and the prerequisites for good governance, sustainability and effectiveness of social protection systems.
243. The conclusions also encouraged the ILO to foster the exchange of good practices in the implementation of the recommendation between and among member States.
244. Finally, the Committee requested the Office, as noted in the conclusions, to take into account the General Survey on social protection floors, the detailed views of the discussion that followed and the outcome of its discussion in relevant ILO work and technical assistance services.
245. The Employer members support the adoption of the outcome of the discussion on the General Survey. We trust that the Office will consider the constructive discussions that took place, the detailed views expressed by the participants, as well as the content of the outcome document in carrying out its work.

### **Outcome of the discussion of the General Survey concerning the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)**

246. The Committee approved the outcome of its discussion, which is reproduced below.

#### ***Introduction***

247. The Committee welcomed the opportunity, in its examination of the General Survey on the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), to discuss its core and topical issue in the context of the ILO's Centenary.
248. It recalled that the extension of social protection systems to all in need is at the core of the ILO's mandate and a primary concern of the Organization, as reflected in its Constitution and reaffirmed in the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia. As such, social protection constitutes one of the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda.
249. The Committee recalled that social protection is a powerful tool against poverty, inequality, and social exclusion and key in furthering human dignity, social justice and social cohesion. Investments in social protection floors stimulate economic growth and stability and the performance of national economies.
250. Moreover, the Committee noted that social protection floors address some of the major development objectives established by the 2030 Agenda to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and notably that of ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.

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## ***Needs of member States and reality on the ground***

- 251.** Looking at the implementation of the Recommendation in member States and at progress made in achieving universal social protection, the Committee observed that significant gaps and disparities in access to essential healthcare and basic income security guarantees throughout the life cycle remained.
- 252.** Considerable progress has been achieved in many parts of the world as regards the establishment of social protection floors and of schemes and benefits providing higher levels of protection. This resulted in improvements in coverage, both in terms of persons and of contingencies, and in increased effectiveness of social security systems. It recognized that the most effective and efficient combination of contributory and non-contributory benefits and schemes were implemented through approaches tailored to national circumstances. The Committee recalled the need for effective schemes and benefits to be anchored in law, based on social solidarity and on the other principles set out in the Recommendation. In this connection, it observed that national social protection floors policies, setting out tangible, measurable and time-bound objectives played an important role in extension strategies.
- 253.** The Committee noted, in particular, the innovative measures taken by certain countries to overcome some of the obstacles they face in achieving universal social protection. In this regard, it noted the particular challenges related to protecting those in the informal economy and those in non-standard forms of employment. It further observed that the expansion of new forms of work have brought new opportunities but also new challenges, including in terms of access to, adequacy and sustainability of social protection systems. In this context and in accordance with the Recommendation, it stressed the need for national social protection floors policies and systems to be conceived so as to promote productive economic activity and the growth of formal employment as well as education, vocational training, productive skills and employability. In the designing and the implementation of effective social protection floors, it was also important to combine preventive promotional and active measures, benefits and social services. In this respect, the role of public services is fundamental. In addition, the Committee considered that the new technological, demographic and environmental contexts raised additional opportunities and challenges for social protection systems globally which needed to be given careful consideration.
- 254.** The Committee also observed that the large social protection deficits were closely related to the lack of sufficient funding. The Committee further noted that financing mechanisms based on solidarity were at the heart of social security and prerequisites for achieving universal social protection floors. They needed to be accompanied by measures that enhance income generation, entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises to reduce poverty and inequality in a sustainable manner. Social protection must be considered an investment in the human potential.

## ***Common commitments***

- 255.** The Committee noted the shared commitment among the tripartite constituents to strengthen efforts towards the achievement of universal social protection floors, through a diversity of means and approaches, based notably on equality, non-discrimination, social solidarity and promotion of productive economic activity. It is the primary and overall responsibility of the State to deliver social protection.
- 256.** The Committee further noted the commitment among tripartite constituents to move upwards in extending social protection to ensure that social protection floors do not become a ceiling but a stepping stone towards sustainable social security systems guaranteeing effective levels of protection, to as many people as possible.
- 257.** The Committee welcomed the common commitment among the tripartite constituents for the formulation of comprehensive social protection policies, coordinated and coherent with

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other social policies notably education and health, as well as with economic, education and vocational training, and employment policies. It further noted the commitment on the need for an integrated and holistic approach to social protection, in the context of economic and social development.

- 258.** It also noted the strong commitment to strengthen effective social dialogue and participatory processes as fundamental elements of policy formulation and implementation on – and as prerequisites for the good governance, the sustainability and the effectiveness – of social protection floors systems.

### ***ILO means of action***

#### **1. Standards-related action**

- 263.** The Committee considered that the full promotion of the Recommendation played a significant role in enhancing its application and furthering social protection in member States and urged the ILO to enhance its promotion activities to this objective.

#### **2. Development cooperation and technical assistance**

- 264.** The Committee underlined the high value of ILO technical assistance in the effective implementation of the Recommendation and called upon the ILO to continue providing support to constituents in the establishment of comprehensive social protection systems, including social protection floors, and in the formulation and implementation of related policies and strategies. The Committee also highlighted the importance of supporting national dialogue processes, including the participation of social partners. It also underlined that the ILO should provide assistance to member States in developing tools for data collection and analysis to measure progress and gaps.
- 265.** The Committee called upon the ILO to continue its efforts aimed at reinforcing the capacities of tripartite constituents and national administrations. The Committee also encouraged the ILO to foster the exchange of good practices in the implementation of the Recommendation between and among member States.
- 266.** The Committee also stressed the importance of increasing coherence between international development partners in the field of social protection and called upon the ILO to continue playing a prominent role in this respect.
- 267.** The Committee requested the Office to take into account the General Survey on Social Protection Floors, the discussion that followed and the outcome of its discussion, in relevant ILO work.

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