



The International Trade Union Confederation, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and World Solidarity cordially invite you to a global conference on:

Financing social protection

Exploring innovative ways to finance social protection on the national and international level

Monday 17 September & Tuesday 18 September 2018

Monday 17 September 8:30 – 17:30

International Trade Union House, Blvd du Roi Albert II 5, Brussels

Auditorium on the 1st floor

8.30 – 9.30 **Registration and welcome coffee**

9:30 – 10:00 Welcome address by **Alison Tate**, Director of Economic and Social Policy of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Video message by **Sharan Burrow**, General-Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation

10:00 – 12.30 **Session 1: Identifying the costs of social protection reform**

Moderator: **Evelyn Astor**, ITUC wages and social protection specialist

Presentation on the FES Social Protection Floors Index by **Mira Bierbaum**, PhD Fellow at the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance and United Nations University

Presentation on feasibility studies for financing conducted in Latin America by **Carolina Dantas**, Technical Advisor on Social Protection at the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas

Panel discussion, followed by an open discussion around the following questions:

- *What are the biggest challenges to financing social protection?*
- *How are changes to the labour market (rise of non-standard forms of work, digitalisation, automatisisation) affecting the financing of social protection?*
- *How can we identify the costs needed to finance social protection reforms?*
- *Which countries need to increase their financial resources the most to attain universal social protection floors?*

- *What can we learn from Latin American examples presented, and where could further research be useful?*

Panellists:

- **Francesca Bastagli**, Head of Social Protection and Social Policy, Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
- **Hilma Mote**, Executive Director of the Africa Labour Research Network, ITUC-Africa
- **Plamen Dimitrov**, President of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bulgaria (KNSB) CITUB
- **Umesh Chandra Upadhyaya**, Chief of the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions' (GEFONT) Organising Academy
- **Guillermo Zuccotti**, Social Protection Specialist at CGT-RA Argentina
- **Fabio Duran**, Head of Public Finance, Actuarial and Statistical Services, International Labour Organisation

12.30 – 14.00 **Lunch**

14.00 – 15.30 **Session 2: Possible sources of financing on the national level**

Moderator: **Bart Verstraeten**, Political Secretary, World Solidarity

Presentation on the expansion of fiscal space for social protection by **Isabel Ortiz**, Director of the Social Protection Department at the International Labour Organisation

Panel discussion, followed by an open discussion around the following questions:

- *How can trade unions and social movements extend social protection schemes for all, including informal economy workers?*
- *How are such extensions to social protection systems being financed?*
- *How are financing bases for existing social protection systems being altered?*
- *Should alternative sources of financing social protection be utilised? If so, what types of sources can be used?*

Panellists:

- **Owen Tudor**, Head of International Relations, TUC UK
- **Sulistri Afrileston**, Deputy President KSBSI-Indonesia
- **Bogdan Iuliu Hossu**, President, Cartel Alfa, Romania
- **Liz Nelson**, Director of Tax Justice and Human Rights, Tax Justice Network
- **Francisca Jiménez**, Director of AMUSSOL-CASC, Dominican Republic

15.30 – 15.45 **Coffee break**

15.45 – 17.15 **Session 3: International financing possibilities**

Moderator: **Evelyn Astor**, ITUC wages and social protection specialist

Presentation on the role of development organisations in the financing of social protection by **Juergen Hohmann**, Social Protection Expert at DG DEVCO, European Commission



Video contribution on the Global Fund for Social Protection by **Olivier de Schutter**, Professor of Law at Université Catholique de Louvain and Former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

Panel discussion, followed by an open discussion around the following questions:

- *Should the financing of social protection be supported at international level? If so, how?*
- *How are development organisations (e.g., IFIs, development banks, foreign donors) contributing to financing social protection and can their contribution be strengthened?*
- *How can international financial institutions play a positive role in supporting the financing of social protection?*

Panellists:

- **Bénédicte Fonteneau**, Research Expert at HIVA Sustainable Development Research Group, KU Leuven
- **Jaurès Akibe**, General Secretary of National Union of Social Workers, Benin
- **Stephen Kidd**, Senior Social Policy Specialist and CEO, Development Pathways
- **Anush Bezhanyan**, Sector Manager Social Protection at the World Bank
- **David Coady**, Division Chief of the Expenditure Policy Division at the Fiscal Affairs Department of the IMF

17.15 – 17.30 Closing remarks by **Alison Tate**, Director of Economic and Social Policy, ITUC

Tuesday 18 September 8:30 – 14:00

International Trade Union House, Blvd du Roi Albert II 5, Brussels, Room B on 1st Floor

Working discussion among trade unions

8.30 – 9.00 ***Registration and welcome coffee***

9.00 – 11.00 **Reflections on yesterday's discussions**

Opening and summary of topics discussed yesterday by **Alison Tate**, Director of Economic and Social Policy, ITUC

Reactions to the discussions yesterday, followed by an open discussion around the following questions:

- *What financing methods at national level are most effective/desirable?*
- *Should the financing of social protection be better supported at the international level, and if so how?*
- *Suggestions on possible follow-up research and activities?*

- *How can unions support workers in non-standard forms of employment and the informal economy for them to be included in social protection systems?*

First reactions from:

- **Benson Upah**, Head of Information at the Nigeria Labour Congress
- **Giorgi Chanturidze**, Head of Economics at the Georgian Trade Union Confederation
- **Francis Kim**, Senior Officer, Research & Information at ITUC for Asia and the Pacific
- **Carolina Dantas**, Technical Advisor on Social Protection at the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas
- **Drissa Soare**, Social Protection Expert at CNTB, Burkina Faso

11.00 – 11.20 **Coffee break**

11.20 – 12.45 **Defining a common agenda**

- *How can we effectively link fiscal and social policies in our advocacy work (what is the narrative linking tax with social protection)?*
- *How can we develop (more) strategic alliances for social protection at the national and international level (civil society, academics, etc.)?*
- *What are our biggest research and advocacy priorities?*
- *Who are our advocacy targets (e.g. national governments, international financial institutions, regional structures, etc.)?*
- *What are the key events and opportunities we want to focus on at national and international level? (e.g., national social security council negotiations, regional meetings, UN processes, trade deal negotiations, input into IMF strategic framework on social protection, etc.)*

First reactions from:

- **Maria Aparecida Faria**, Deputy Secretary General, CUT Brazil
- **Prit SoUot**, Legal Coordinator, Cambodian Labour Confederation
- **Ghislaine Saizonou Broohm**, Coordinator of the Department of Equality and Social Protection at ITUC-Africa
- **Baba Aye**, Health and Social Services Officer at Public Services International
- **Ursula Kulke**, Senior Relations Officer and Coordinator of the Social Protection Cluster in ILO-ACTRAV

12.45 – 13.00 Closing remarks by **Alison Tate**, Director of Economic and Social Policy, ITUC

13.00 – 14.00 **End of conference and lunch**



Side events - afternoon of 18 September

13.00 – 15.00 Trade union meeting with the ILO (Firenze Meeting Room on 3rd floor)

Trade unions will have the opportunity to meet with **Isabel Ortiz**, Director of the ILO Social Protection department, and other ILO staff members. This will be an opportunity for unions to communicate their priorities on social protection, explain the challenges they are facing at national level, and learn more about ILO work to promote social protection.

Please note that simultaneous interpretation will not be available for this meeting, however ILO staff speak English, French and Spanish.

15.15 – 17.30 Financing strategies for social protection: Tools for ensuring sufficiency, stability and sustainability (Room B on 1st floor)

This seminar, jointly organized by **DG DEVCO from the European Commission** and the **OECD Development Centre**, will discuss methodologies for assessing the financing of social protection developed and/or used by the European Union Social Protection Systems Programme (EU-SPS). This seminar is open to all conference participants.

This meeting will be in English without simultaneous interpretation.

Context of the conference

Social protection floors are essential tools in eliminating poverty, as well as driving factors in boosting employment, fostering skill development, formalising work, reducing inequality and achieving inclusive economic growth. The economic and social benefits of social protection have long been promoted by trade unions and numerous civil society organisations. However, containing and reducing social expenditure has been the primary focus of many international financial institutions as well as national governments for decades.

There is nevertheless an increasing international acknowledgement that social protection is an essential component of sustainable development, notably with the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals [target 1.3](#) on implementing social protection systems and measures for all, as well as the recent launch of the [Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection](#). It is moreover worrying that the ILO [World Social Protection Report](#) finds that social protection schemes are underdeveloped in most parts of the world. The majority of the world's population is not covered under any type of social protection scheme and less than 30 per cent enjoys comprehensive coverage. For workers in the informal economy and in non-standard forms of employment, access to social protection is even more limited, because they tend not to have the possibility to be covered under contributory schemes. In addition, the benefits that do



exist are often not adequate to lift people out of poverty. The ITUC and its affiliates have repeatedly stressed the need to ensure adequate, comprehensive social protection systems for all. With regard to this they have called for the implementation of ILO [Convention 102](#) on social security, [Recommendation 202](#) on social protection floors and [Recommendation 204](#) on the transition from the informal to the formal economy in all countries.

However, even if the political will is there, governments are increasingly faced with financing pressures, which include; limited tax revenue, budget deficits, lending commitments, economic crises and demographic ageing. If social protection is to be extended significantly, it is, thus, important to identify the costs of such social protection reforms. A useful tool in this regard can be the [Social Protection Floor Index](#), which reports on the gaps in social protection and the funds needed to fill these. It ranks a large number of developing countries by the additional funding (as a percentage of GDP) that would be needed to provide universal social protection floors. Furthermore, the ILO has developed a [Social Protection Floors Cost Calculator](#) that estimates the costs of providing different levels of social protections floors in 57 low-income countries. In addition to such tools at the international level, national-level feasibility studies have sought to identify the amount of financing needed as well as possible sources. The Trade Union Confederation of the Americas have conducted a number of feasibility studies in Latin American countries. These tools and studies show that universal social protection floors are feasible in all countries, however some may need some financial assistance initially, to catalyse the process.

In light of this, new and innovative ways of organising and financing social protection could be explored in order to improve the coverage and adequacy of social protection schemes. In this regard, there have been numerous initiatives by trade unions and civil society organisations to realise social protection for workers who fall outside the social security provisions for standard workers, such as those in the informal economy. In the Dominican Republic, for example, trade unions have managed to organise social protection for informal workers through the [AMUSSOL](#) programme, allowing them to contribute to and benefit from the social protection system for standard workers - giving them access to quality and affordable health care, employment injury protection and pensions. Governments might also be able to employ innovative ways of financing social protection. As set out by [Ortiz et al.](#), measures can be taken to combat tax evasion and illicit financial flows, relocate expenditures, restructure debt and levy progressive taxes on labour, capital and/or financial transactions.

Nevertheless, even with all such measures in place, some countries might not be able to raise sufficient financial resources to provide social security to the entire population. This is why, in addition to identifying new financing sources at the national-level, the use of international sources of funding could be explored. This would be especially useful for states that have low fiscal capacity and/or experience major economic shocks. One possible way to better fund social protection at the international level could be better orient development aid and funds from international financial institutions towards social protection programmes. An additional international financing mechanism could also be envisaged, such as the [Global Fund for Social Protection \(GFSP\)](#) as proposed by the UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Food and on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.



With this conference, we aim to bring together unions, civil society organisations, academics and international organisations to discuss the challenges of financing adequate and sustainable social protection systems for all and to collectively explore solutions to financing challenges. These actors will discuss the methods for identifying adequate financial resources for social protection reforms, examine the various ways such reforms could be funded both on the national and the international level and identify opportunities for further work together. The second day of this conference will be reserved exclusively for trade unions, where they will discuss how to further build their research and technical capacities to support their claims for social protection reforms, as well as define a common trade union advocacy agenda.