

# Conclusions

## Seminar on Inter-sectoral Public Policies: Social Protection, Labor and Employment

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Ministério do  
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Ministério do Desenvolvimento  
Social e Combate à Fome



**RIAL**  
Red Interamericana para  
la Administración Laboral



Red Interamericana  
de Protección Social

## **SEMINAR ON INTER-SECTORAL PUBLIC POLICIES: SOCIAL PROTECTION, LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

This Seminar was organized jointly by the OAS and the Ministries of Labor and of Social Development and Fight against Hunger of Brazil. It is a joint activity of the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN) and the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL), in response to mandates from the Meeting of Ministers and High Authorities of Social Development and the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML), both of which are OAS forums.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) To gain awareness of innovations and progress at the regional level with regard to the inter-sectoral approach to social protection and job creation through programs targeted at the most vulnerable populations.
- 2) To review political and management challenges arising, such as financing and inter-ministerial coordination and implementation.
- 3) To analyze the role of the private sector and civil society in comprehensive social protection and employment strategies.
- 4) To move forward in systematizing national experiences in this area for their incorporation in horizontal cooperation activities carried out by the Inter-American Social Protection Network (IASPN) and the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL).

**PARTICIPANTS:** Representatives from the Labor and/or Social Development Ministries of 25 Member States of the Organization attended the Seminar. Also present were representatives from 10 international agencies, civil society, the private sector, IACML advisory bodies and academia. In total there were 70 participants.

**CONCEPT DOCUMENT AND QUESTIONNAIRES:** The OAS, jointly with ECLAC and ILO, prepared a concept document titled “Social Protection and Employment Generation: Analysis of Experiences derived from Co-responsibility Transfer Programs” which served as a guide for the Seminar. To access the inter-agency document, please click [here](#). This document was open for comments, which were included in the final version.

In addition, the organizers sent Questionnaires to all the Labor and Social Development Ministries on their social protection systems and inter-sectoral coordination schemes.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions of the working sessions, as drafted by the moderators of each Panel, are presented below. This document was also open for comments.

These conclusions are highlights of the major aspects of the discussions, but the event's comprehensive information, including presentations, documents and audio recordings, can be found in its web page, in: [www.sedi.oas.org/ddse](http://www.sedi.oas.org/ddse).

### OPENING SESSION

- 1) Mention was made of the importance of the inter-relation between social protection and employment for the poverty reduction efforts in the region. In that regard, reference was made to the need for inter-sectoral public policies in the area of social protection and poverty reduction, something which necessarily implies redefining the role of the state and redefining the instrumentation of public policies/need for joint work by several state agencies.
- 2) Decent work: the need to turn work into a focal point of public policies.
- 3) RIAL and IASPN provide a framework to articulate the interrelation of themes and priorities in order to attain the poverty reduction targets.
- 4) Process of collective global construction: in which economic development is tied to social development, and with a commitment by heads of state regarding the ethical commitment of ensuring citizenship rights. It thus plays a role in guaranteeing citizenship rights.
- 5) Importance of integrating inter-sectoral approaches / promoting inter-sectoral management / creating public systems with an inter-sectoral approach, and based on good quality policies, to overcome public policy fragmentation.

### PANEL I – FRAMEWORK CONFERENCES: SCOPES AND CHALLENGES OF ARTICULATING SOCIAL PROTECTION, LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT

This Panel included two basic presentations. The first one was by the OAS representative, presenting the document that served as foundation for the event, followed by commentary from ILO and ECLAC, the agencies co-authoring the document. The second presentation was by the National Secretariat of Brazil's MDS, on the Program *Bolsa Família*, the results of which are included in the conclusions on national experiences.

Major ideas of the presentations and discussions on the concept document:

- 1) Senior political authorities (Ministerial Summit of the Americas) consider social protection an essential instrument in the fight against poverty, as well as an instrument of welfare provision and expansion of opportunities.
- 2) The document centers on the analysis of co-responsibility transfer programs (CTPs) and the manner in which they are incorporating job creation initiatives. This issue is at the forefront of social policy in the 21st century: How to promote better productive inclusion of CTPs beneficiaries so they can get out of poverty in a sustainable way. In other words, the document responds to a core concern: how to provide sustainability to the CTPs efforts. And also to respond to a demand from people, which is to have decent work.
- 3) CTPs are generally the entry door to broader protection systems, which seek to organize and articulate the offering of state programs on (contributory) social security and (non-contributory) social assistance.
- 4) The incorporation of the employment variable into CTPs pursues a graduation (exit) from these programs through the insertion of their beneficiaries into the labor market, seeking to reduce poverty in a sustainable manner. CTPs can be an access door to Decent Work.
- 5) Social protection and CTPs require reflecting on the role of the state and public policies in social and economic development. On the other hand, the co-responsibility requirements of these programs imply a new role for citizens (active citizenship).
- 6) The effectiveness of social protection is dependent on the coordinated and integrated action of the state. Moving forward with inter-sectorality and interministerial coordination of these actions is a major management issue.
- 7) There are activation measures used by CTPs at 3 levels: 1) Supply-side labor market instruments (training courses, remedial education); 2) Demand-side labor market instruments (direct and indirect job creation); 3) labor intermediation.
- 8) It is necessary to design state policies versus government policies, which achieve interventions to support long term labor market insertion. In a context of exclusion, a course lasting a few weeks will not have much of an impact; a horizon of universal health and education policies is required.
- 9) Important questions were raised in the commentaries on the document. It was pointed out that the employment variable does not appear as a conditionality within CTPs but rather as an incentive; but it would be worthwhile reflecting upon this. Should participation in labor activities, for example, attending training programs, be a condition to access CTPs? This is a controversial proposal, considering that in many countries the beneficiaries are not unemployed, but rather have precarious work.

- 10) Actions seeking to increase employability are characterized by being long-term. In parallel, the actions in support of individual projects seem to encounter time limitations. It was questioned whether including greater responsibilities of the CTPs in the area of employability could perhaps weaken them.

Other aspects were raised as suggestions to improve the concept document.

- 11) There needs to be a more specific inclusion of a discussion of the inter-sectoral coherence, consistency and coordination between social and economic policies. Job creation should be approached as a core issue in economic policies, including setting it up as their objective. This has already been recognized in the IACML and other international governance schemes.
- 12) The most adequate framework to address the question of articulation between social protection and employment could be the **social protection floor**, on which there is a consensus among a few international bodies (UN, ILO's Global Jobs Pact). Such floor refers to achieving coordinated policies that protect families throughout the life-cycle. Such policies include economic policies, specifically fiscal ones.
- 13) Concern was expressed in the sense that the success of CTPs might represent that they are being burdened with too many responsibilities (Christmas tree syndrome). What is essential is not to have CTPs do all, but having them become articulated with other initiatives (the need for inter-sectoral coordination).

## PANELS II & III: NATIONAL EXPERIENCES

### 1) Considerations on the inter-sectoral perspective and articulation

- **Redefining the role of the state.** Inter-sectoral articulation is part of a state process: reconversion of state structures and public policy organization and management models, which have to shift from a sectoral culture to an integrated and trans-sectoral perspective. In turn, inter-sectorality itself implies a greater integration of stakeholders in the field of social policy, which requires redefining the traditional role of the state.
- **Institutional Framework of the Coordination/Articulation Function.** In order to achieve effective articulation, political leadership and an appropriate institutional framework are required, on the one hand, and on the other, the operational coordination that makes it feasibility. In that context, the need for a social authority or another body responsible for coordinating social protection actions to ensure their articulation was raised. Articulation is required both at the horizontal level with all the agencies and sectors, and vertically across the various levels of government and stakeholders, from the national to the local level.

- **Importance of Political Leadership and Commitment.** Articulation should be considered a priority in the political agenda. Political leadership at the highest level is key to achieve the commitment of the various government agencies towards articulation; further, it gives the social protection system and its programs a greater priority in the political agenda.
  - Inter-sectoral articulations are processes of a political nature, and not merely technical ones: these processes involve ongoing negotiations. At the operational level, it is essential to have spaces for a permanent interaction, such as periodic meetings of all the institutions involved in execution (such as in the case of Brazil's PlanSeq.)
  - The principle of inter-sectorality is a tool to manage public policies in order to achieve the desired results, attain a greater rationality of social policies, avoid duplications, and reduce administrative costs.
  - The challenge of **ownership** of social programs and the need for articulation on the part of Ministries or agencies. Given that they are not always the priorities of these ministries, there may be weak or inadequate commitment, and many times it is merely underpinned by informal coordination arrangements, based on individual will and not institutional decisions.
  - The importance of having a **strategy at the national level** for the implementation of the various social programs under diverse institutions and government levels (national, regional, local). This strategy operates as a navigation chart and promotes the **continuity** of public policies. Of special relevance are the national strategies to fight against poverty.
- 2) The importance of having information systems/unified registries of beneficiaries was highlighted, and of achieving consistency across the various information systems. This significantly contributes to achieving greater inter-sectoral coordination.
  - 3) Reference was made to the double sided electoral impact of CTPs and, in that sense, the need for pursuing institutionality for its own sake and to avoid losing the benefits of the programs.
  - 4) Ensuring funding for social protection programs is a major challenge, and it is indispensable to guarantee their sustainability through time.
  - 5) A pending issue that did not arise in the discussions but has been mentioned in the concept document: the challenges for social protection programs arising from demographic changes and migration.
  - 6) Specific considerations on CTPs and the employment component:
    - For many countries the CTPs are a basic social protection floor; now it is necessary to continue making progress towards social protection systems. The challenge is for CTP beneficiaries to be included in other instances of social protection and employment.

- It is necessary to reflect on the role of these programs in view of the structural deficits in connection with inter-generational constraints to enter the labor market. To this end, it is necessary to have flexible policies that simultaneously include actions to address contingencies and overcome structural difficulties. Among the latter, long term investments in education and training are required.
- It has been seen (the experiences of Argentina and Brazil demonstrate it) that CTPs provide a rapid response to economic crises and prevent greater impacts on the most vulnerable populations.
- In many countries, employment promotion initiatives within CTPs focus on professional training, intermediation and support for self-employment. The efforts continue to be concentrated in addressing the workers in the formal sector.
- In many countries there is a difficulty regarding who is responsible for training and qualifications for the informal and most vulnerable workers (Ministry of Labor or Social Development?)
- Conceiving social protection, and particularly the CTPs, as a gateway to employment is an important contribution of the Seminar's concept document. This is important because it implies that being a CTP beneficiary should not be an indefinite situation.
- The experiences presented show that in labor training and intermediation components, the link with the private sector is indispensable. It should participate in the definition of the training courses to ensure that these are responsive to the profiles required by the production sector.

#### **PANEL IV: EXPERIENCES OF PARTNERSHIPS AMONG THE PRIVATE SECTOR, TRADE UNIONS AND GOVERNMENT ON SOCIAL PROTECTION AND EMPLOYMENT**

- 1) The concept and nature of social protection involve multiple stakeholders, since we are referring to an ensemble of public policies and public and private programs with which societies respond to contingencies. For that reason, any social protection analysis should include the role of public, private and non-governmental stakeholders.
- 2) The previous panels in the seminar addressed inter-sectoral (horizontal) coordination, which involves various government institutions. This panel referred to vertical coordination, which involves different levels of administration, from the national to the local one, including private actors and NGOs.
- 3) In the presentations during the panel and the discussions throughout the event it was possible to see two levels of interaction between the state and the private and non-governmental stakeholders. 1) Public-private partnerships; and 2) institutionalized social dialogue.

- 4) Public-private partnerships have been leveraged in recent years as spaces in which the private stakeholders assist in achieving economic and social objectives.
- 5) In terms of social protection, the state is the regulator, articulator, guarantor and supplier of programs and services; while the private sector and the NGOs are also providers of programs and services. Besides, in some cases they operate as monitors. This implies that the articulation occurs at the technical and operational level.
- 6) The role of the private sector and non-governmental organizations as providers of social protection is achieved through: 1) government procurement to render these services (this is clearly seen in labor training and intermediation programs); 2) the NGOs mission and objectives are consistent with social protection objectives; and 3) corporate social responsibility strategies.
- 7) There is a debate on the concrete contributions of public-private partnerships, in the absence of impact evaluations. The debates raised the issue of the effectiveness of such partnerships for employment, especially when they take place under conditions of high unemployment and labor precariousness.
- 8) The tripartite social dialogue, involving government, workers and employers, has been strengthened in the region with the consolidation of spaces such as the Economic and Social Councils. Such spaces provide a political articulation in terms of social protection; they pose strategic policy objectives that serve as a framework for technical and operational actions.
- 9) The representatives of COSATE and CEATAL, that bring together workers and employers, agreed on the need of guaranteeing their participation in policy decision-making for social protection. Besides, they highlighted the fact that spaces for a tripartite dialogue have been institutionalized in the region, both at the national and hemispheric level.

#### **PANEL V: CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL PROTECTION AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION**

- 1) Evaluation has been present throughout the last years in the region's social development and employment public policy agenda (ministerial meetings of both sectors). In that sense, the evaluation of social protection programs is seen as an essential component of social policies.
- 2) The inter-agency document that was presented as a guideline for the Seminar highlights the need to strengthen and expand the evaluation of CTPs in order to fully understand not only their limitations but also the challenges posed by the inter-sectoral approach.
- 3) A presentation was made on the implementation of the evaluation tool of the Opportunities NY program, and its importance was underlined not only in order to monitor the early outcomes of the program in the short and medium term, but also because of its importance for the results of long term policies. In turn, it is interesting to learn not only about the expected outcomes, but also about unexpected ones, which may provide an input to improve the implementation of social protection programs.



- 4) The relevance of evaluating social policy innovations is recognized, since it is wasteful to implement ineffective strategies. Evaluations serve to gain knowledge on which innovations work in improving the wellbeing of the vulnerable populations. Likewise, reference was made to the need for these information systems to take into consideration not only the cost of the problems to be solved, but also the cost of failing to do so, i.e. the cost of dis-protection.
- 5) The presentation on the social protection policy monitoring and evaluation system in Brazil underscored the creation of an Evaluation Secretariat in the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger, which denotes the importance of including monitoring and evaluation in the institutional arrangements. In the same sense, the need for intra-sectoral coordination across various MDS Secretariats in this regard was also highlighted.
- 6) It was asserted that it is necessary to generate a true evaluation culture as an essential component of management information, and the importance of evidence-based research and data that is accessible and taken into account by social protection policy makers.